

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 12

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This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Resource Teacher, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Professional Development Activities Term 3, 2008

For workshop sessions, please BYO laptop.

Professional Development Event and Activities 2008	Date
Chatter Books for Braille Readers –student activity	Monday 1 st September

To see the annual program and to download programs for professional development activities, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2008.htm>

The Paralympics are coming! September 6-17th, 2008

Don't forget to let your students, parents, teachers and particularly PE teachers know the Paralympics are coming! Australia has a proud tradition of supporting the Paralympics which showcases the abilities of elite athletes with a disability. Open to athletes with a physical disability this includes athletes who are legally blind. Some of the sports include:

- goalball
- judo
- swimming
- tandem bicycling-velodrome and distance road events
- athletics including sprint and distance track events and field events such as shotput, discus, long jump and high jump.
- sailing
- equestrian events also feature.

The Paralympics takes place a few weeks after the Olympics which gives organisers the time needed to import the athletes' equipment. Boats and horses, for instance, must be brought into the country and essential adjustments must be made to the athletes' accommodation to allow access.

The Australian Paralympic team was recently announced with some 27 of the athletes coming from the Talent Search Program which is regularly featured in the Bulletin and supported by our Visiting Teachers and students. This press release from the official Australian Paralympic web site gives some interesting insights.

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Australian Paralympic Team Announced

“The Australian Paralympic Team to compete at the 2008 Beijing Games was announced today by Greg Hartung, President of the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC).

The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Federal Minister for Youth and Sport, Kate Ellis, joined the announcement today in Parliament House, Canberra, of the 170 athletes to represent Australia at the 13th Paralympic Games in September.

“The Paralympic Games are unquestionably the world’s greatest test for elite athletes with a disability and there is no doubt that Beijing will be the most competitive Games ever,” Mr Hartung said.

“Australians have high expectations of their Paralympic athletes, and I know the athletes named today will compete in Beijing in the great tradition established by Australian Paralympians in Games past, continuing our country’s impressive record.

“We expect the standard of competition to be at an all-time high, particularly from China, Great Britain, the USA and emerging Paralympic powers such as Ukraine, Japan and Brazil. As Australia’s Paralympic athletes continue to make the transition further into the realm of elitism, so do more and more athletes with a disability from right around the world.

“While they will leave these shores as the best-prepared and best-supported team in our history, they will arrive in China facing their toughest-ever test,” Mr Hartung said. Athletes from every Australian state and territory have earned selection for Beijing.

Set to compete in 13 sports when the Games begin in 39 days, Australia will be represented by 95 first-time Paralympians in addition to 75 returning athletes, who have a total of 156 Games and 180 medals to their credit.

Having featured at every Paralympic Games since the first summer Games in Rome 1960, the Australian Team’s record is formidable, highlighted by numerous top 10 finishes and capped by its number one ranking on the medal tally at the Sydney Games in 2000.

Now, with Beijing in its sights and with 908 medals from previous Paralympic competition, the 2008 Team could be on the verge of earning Australia its 1000th Paralympic medal. Consisting of 96 men and 74 women, the Australian Team includes 27 athletes, or 17 percent of the Team, who were discovered through the Australian Paralympic Committee’s Toyota Talent Search program.

A total of 992 people have participated in the Talent Search Program since it was launched in March 2005, its success underlined by those 27 athletes who have already earned selection in the 2008 Team. The Australian Paralympic Team will depart for Beijing on 1 September ahead of the Beijing Paralympic Games opening ceremony on 6 September. In all, there will be 472 medals on offer.

“Independent research tells us that a significant majority of Australians followed the success of the Australian Paralympic Team in Athens. We are confident Australians will again get behind their team as they strive for success in Beijing,” said Mr Hartung.

Media Release, Tim Mannion Australian Paralympic web site <http://www.paralympic.com.au/>
Beijing Paralympics: <http://en.paralympic.beijing2008.cn/index.shtml>

Braille Game

Try a quiz game to make learning the literary braille code fun for students. Here are a few suggestions:

Take a sheet of cardboard and add pockets to make a quiz game. Call it "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire". The categories could be: dot five words', shortforms, or lower wordsigns at the beginning of a word for example. Ask the student to name or read the cards in each category. Each time they succeed they get closer to the jackpot. Jeopardy or Einstein Factor are other names you could use.

For the sports minded you could use a football theme.

Cut out a football field and make cards in the shape of footballs. Add braille contractions to the footballs each time they read one correctly they get a point. (If they don't you get a point). When they get 6 right they get a goal represented by a bigger football. They can attach their goals to the footy field. Who ever gets the most goals and points wins.

Touchable Boxes

A "Do It Yourself" idea using a hard plastic document holder and Velcro.

Purpose: To teach math concepts, spatial orientation and other concepts to students who are blind or who have low vision. The box begins with a plastic box with a smooth, flat, snap-lock top. Place two strips of self-adhesive Velcro in parallel lines on the lid, so they resemble lines on a sheet of paper. Turn the lid over and attach three parallel lines. This creates a set of worksheet templates.

Other configurations and layouts for special uses can be created using additional boxes. Collect sets of ten to twelve one-inch objects. Sets can be made up of real objects; seashells, coins, acorns, stones, small toys, or craft miniatures. Add a small self-adhesive Velcro dot to each item and store each set in a separate zip-lock bag in the box.

As a teaching tool, place the lid within the student's reach and attach items from the appropriate set to illustrate the concept. Students can locate, add, or remove items to demonstrate understanding. Placing the Velcro dots on objects so they are not always right side up helps teach form constancy and position in space. Using the same item made of different materials teaches attention to likenesses and differences.

The sets can be used for sorting and classifying, spatial concepts, counting and math concepts, sequences and patterns, orientation to a page, or story starters and language enhancement.

From: <http://www.abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=113583&top=0&productid=73774&trail=0>

Sukudo Grid

This idea has been circulating the email lists for awhile and I am not sure exactly where it originated from so thank-you to who ever sent it! There is a grid available from the American Printing House called the Branhan slate and Branhan cubes. This is intended for kids to learn how to work math problems. It is a kind of rubber board that is a grid of 16 by 16 square holes. The cubes sit down into the holes. The cubes have all the Braille numbers from 0 to 9 and one you can use as a blank. It is great for Sukudo, because you can move the cubes around changing the numbers easily. I'm sure the resourceful types could make something similar.

BRANHAN SLATE and BRANNAN CUBES Both together cost U.S. \$40.00 From APH

http://www.aph.org/museum/virtual_exhibit/exhibit3/e30006b.htm

Sudoku is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The objective is to fill a 9×9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9, only one time each (that is, exclusively). The puzzle setter provides a partially completed grid.

Guide Dogs Victoria - Upcoming events

September 22 -24

Junior program based at the Guide Dogs Victoria campus in Kew. The theme of the program is “Shop til you Drop”. We ran a program a few years ago with this theme and the students and many staff had a great time putting their current shopping skills to the test and even learning a few new ones. Completed applications must be received by GDV by Friday August 29.

September 23

“Fun with Dogs Program” is one of the new programs that we are running at GDV for children. For further information about this program please contact O&M Erin Galloway.

October 1

Public Transport Eastern Suburbs Challenge. For further information about this program please contact O&M Erin Galloway.

October 5

Guide Dog Information Day

The program will be held at the GDV campus in Kew and is focused on providing information on the role of a guide dog in terms of mobility. For further information about this program please contact O&M Erin Galloway.

December 1-5

“Sydney” program. For information about the program and the application requirements please contact O&M Dean Johnson.

Completed applications must be received by GDV by Friday August 29.

Sensory Motor Program

Tuesdays October 7 – December 16

This is a new program initiated by the Occupational Therapy team at GDV. For further information please contact Rachel Hansen OT.

Look Out, Marcus

The book “Look Out, Marcus! Growing up with low vision” is available free of charge. If you would like a copy or require extra copies please contact Lisa Brown at lisa.b@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Getabout Newsletter

Guide Dogs Victoria newsletter “Getabout” has a new look, a copy of the July issue is included with this Bulletin.

For further information about any aspect of the Children’s Mobility Service please contact any member of the team:

Rachel Morgan 9854 4469,
Sharon Taylor 9854 4496,
Lil Deverell 9854 4542,
Alicia Madden 9854 4493,
Janelle O’Loughlin 9854 4520,
Erin Galloway 9854 4521,
Rachel Hansen OT 9854 4456 or
Dean Johnson 9854 4506

Wombat Walkabout

When Visiting Teacher, Abbey Dunne from England, returned home after her time with us at SVRC she took with her a toy wombat and named him Kevin. She has introduced “Kevin” to a couple of her young students. Tia and Alex wrote/brailled to us and sent us a very cute squirrel called Chip.

This is what Tia typed:

Hello I am tia.

Thank you for the wombat.

Here is a squirrel. They eat nuts.

Love tia.

Tia says as well as nuts he likes acorns and needs water to drink.

Alex brailled this:

Hello I am Alex

Thank you for the wombat.

Heere is a squirrel, they liv in the wood.

Love Alex

x x x x x x x x x x

Alex says if you can find somewhere high up for him to live he will be happiest.

If you have a student who would like an English “large print” friend or “brailleing” friend let us know. Chip the squirrel would like to visit a few Australian homes and make some Australian friends and we could find out how Kevin the Wombat is going on his overseas trip.

From Toni

A teacher resource for Autistic Disorder / Aspergers Disorder

This 'starter' resource pack for teachers has been developed by South Australian Department of Education and Child Services. There is a powerpoint designed to take teachers through the beginning steps of *what to do* and *where to start* when they have a student with Autistic Disorder or Asperger Disorder in their class.

Links have been included in the resource pack to recommended resources and websites.

The information is attached in booklet form.

Suggested support plans are also included for use to support schools and classroom teachers.

I would recommend teachers visit this site.

<https://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst/pages/resources>

from Deb

Umpires Needed for Blind Cricket

Do you know anyone who might be interested in offering their services as an umpire for Blind Cricket? The Victorian Blind Cricket Association, V.B.C.A. are in need of some assistance. Since last Cricket season, two of their umpires have retired, and they obviously need to replace them.

The V.B.C.A. offers umpires a small contribution toward their travel costs each week as they are totally reliant on sighted personnel for this role. The season will commence on Saturday October 4th which is the week after the AFL Grand Final and will continue until the long weekend in March.

Should you know of anybody who might be interested in umpiring blind cricket, could you please contact Alf O'Neill, President V.B.C.A. on (03) 9699 3111 or email sales@ocsm.com.au

Quality School Sunglasses

IDOL EYES AUSTRALIA has been specialising in children's sunglasses for 21 years. Their sunglasses are available in two sizes and three colours: red, blue or yellow. All sunglasses comply with the mandatory Australian/New Zealand Sunglasses Standard. They cost \$5.20 +GST. The recommended retail price is \$14.99. They can be bought in bulk for school to make an interesting school fundraiser.

Contact: Peter R. J. Carruthers

IDOL EYES

P.O. Box 121

Narwee N.S.W. 2209

Telephone: (02) 9899 9288

Facsimile: (02) 9899 9288

Mobile: 0419 635 868

E-mail: idoles@exemail.com.au

Web: <http://home.exetel.com.au/idoles/>

Water Aerobics – Come and Try Day

Blind Sports Victoria is inviting you to a “Water Aerobics Come & Try Day”.

This is an opportunity to learn, have fun, get fit and be involved in a great program!

Open to all ages and everyone is welcome

When: Friday, 22 August

Where: City Baths, 420 Swanston Street, Melbourne

Time: 2-3 p.m.

Cost: Free

If transport is required, we have a bus leaving from Vision Australia, 454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong at 1.00 p.m. and returning on completion of the session. As seating on the bus is limited, please register your interest with the Blind Sports Victoria Office.

If you are interested contact Bernadette Dillon, Program Co-ordinator, Blind Sports Victoria on (03) 9822 8876 or email: blindsports@netspace.net.au

This program has been made possible by Melbourne City Council

Indoor Rock Climbing

Interested in trying rock climbing? Vision Australia is holding a rock climbing day for beginners.

When: Friday 19th September 2008.

Where: Cliffhanger Climbing Gym Altona, Corner of Doherty's Rd & Grieve Parade, Altona

Time: 9.30 – 11.30 AM

Cost: \$20

- The beginners lesson is one and half hours duration.
- There will be support from Staff and Volunteers.
- Enjoy Indoor Rock Climbing in a safe and exciting environment
- Transport leaving from Vision Australia Essendon at 9:30am and returning at 11:30am
- Limited Numbers so get in quick
- Climbing buddies/companions welcome

Please call (03)93706111 to book your spot or email

louise.pettigrew@visionaustralia.org

Renwick Courses

Teaching Braille Workshop.

September 1

A one-day Braille workshop that will focus upon emergent Braille literacy for beginning Braille learners of all ages. Participants will gain hands-on experience of developing early-Braille activities including activities that address 'early stage one' literacy and numeracy curriculum outcomes.

Presented by: Frances Gentle (Lecturer in Vision Impairment, RIDBC Renwick Centre) Tricia d'Apice (RIDBC Teleschool), Sr Helen Merrin (St Lucy's School) with additional presentations on preschool perspectives from Harzita Hashim and Glenda Bell (RIDBC VisionEd).

Duration: 1 day (9AM – 4 PM)

Communication Strategies for Students with Sensory and Multiple Disabilities.

September 29

Students who have sensory and multiple disabilities have a complex range of needs that affect all aspects of their communication and learning. This workshop aims at exploring the range of factors that affect communication, and the types of strategies that can be used to address them. The workshop will be interactive in nature, drawing upon participants' experience as well as on theory and evidence-based practice.

Presented by: Julie Shylan (Principal, RIDBC Alice Betteridge School)

Duration: 1 day (9 AM – 4 PM)

Prematurity and Cortical Vision Impairment.

December 3

It is well known that the survival of babies born prematurely has increased greatly in the recent past. However, this increase results in low birth weight and this carries significant morbidity for ophthalmic problems. About half of babies born at 25 weeks will have learning difficulties, and/or problems with their eyesight and hearing. The eyes of premature infants are especially vulnerable to injury after birth. They are at heightened risk of retinopathy of prematurity as well as CVI among other disorders. This one day course will explain some of the factors on vision and the visual pathways that stem from being born prematurely.

Presented by: Dr John Ravenscroft (Senior Research Fellow, RIDBC Renwick Centre), Dr Stephen Hing (Westmead Children's Hospital) and Dr Jennifer Bowen (Neonatal Unit, Royal North Shore Hospital).

Duration: (9 AM – 4 PM)

For more information go to the Renwick web site at <http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick>

Obituary

Taylor Sutton 23.3.91 – 30.7.08

Taylor came on Visiting Teacher Service in mid 1996 whilst a student at Yarrabah School in Aspendale. Her first Visiting Teacher was Leanne Philp, followed by Jeni Blake, who followed her to Nepean school for physical impairments. Visiting Teacher, Lee Clarke supported Taylor from 2003 -2006 at Nepean and then in the past two years Jeni Blake has been her visiting teacher.

Taylor was loved by all and had a presence in this world that few will forget. Her beautiful smile meant that everyone was attracted to talk to her. Despite her severe physical and communicative limitations she was a typical teenager and liked to hear the latest gossip. In 2007, she underwent major spinal corrective surgery and complications meant that she spent months in hospital. She finally returned to school in May 2008 but passed away on the 30th July in hospital. A most popular figure at school she loved dressing up for the class fashion shoot in 2007 and was most photogenic with her expressive eyes. Our sympathy goes out to her parents Michael and Clare siblings and family who supported her through her long periods in hospital in the past year. May she rest in peace – a student who will be long remembered with great admiration and affection for her contribution to her school, courage and inspiration she brought others.

SVRC News

Welcome to the following new staff: Sally Fathers will be part of the Eastern Region Visiting Teacher team replacing Jenny Williams while she is on leave. Other new staff include Maureen Conlan, replacing Rita Farrelly and Gabrielle Graf joins the Visiting Teachers in Western Region from 1st September 2008.

We have four desks at the SVRC looking for a home. If you think you might like to adopt a desk please give Dianne a call on 03 98410242. They will only be here for another two weeks!

Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Toni Chilton, Annette Godfrey-Magee and Dianne Skillern and all those who contributed to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to the fabulous team of proof-readers, stuffers and mailers. If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', or you would like to receive the bulletin by email please contact:

Lyn Robinson (who can be emailed at lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au).