

# **The Bulletin**

## **Statewide Vision Resource Centre**

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**Number 17**

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008**

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This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson and from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

### **Professional Development Activities for Term 4, 2008**

- **Dot Power** - 24th and 25th November 2008
- **Expo 2008** - @ SVRC – Friday 28th November
- **Christmas Morning Tea**-Wednesday 3rd December

To download programs for PD activities, visit:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2008.htm>

### **Expo of Access Technology for Vision Impaired - This Friday**

Displays and demonstrations of the latest in technology for people who are vision impaired. Come and see computer technology which enlarges or talks, closed-circuit television systems, calculators, games, low vision aids, talking book technology, optical equipment, white-board transmitters to your computer, braille technology, sports equipment and more.

The day is open to teachers, teacher aides, parents, students, mobility instructors, rehabilitation workers or anyone with an interest in technology for people who are vision impaired. Plan to spend the time to try out something new.

**When:** Friday, 28th November 2008 from 10.00am to 3.30pm

**Where:** Statewide Vision Resource Centre 370-380 Springvale Road, Donvale on the grounds of Heatherwood School

**Cost:** Free

**For further details:** contact Deb Lewis (03) 9841 0242 Or email [deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au)

### **Vision Australia Kickstart 2009**

The Kickstart program has been developed for current and prospective tertiary students who are blind or have low vision and is designed to help students:

- Prepare themselves for further study.
- Find out about on and off-campus services.
- Learn about the Disability Discrimination Act and rights as a student.
- Improve writing and study skills for assignments.
- Learn about new audio formats and adaptive technology.
- Meet other students and professionals who are blind or have low vision who can be of assistance to you.
- Learn strategies for completing study with a view to improving employment prospects.

**Where:** Vision Australia Kooyong, 454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong, VIC

**When:** 6 - 8 January 2009

**Time:** 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

**Cost:** \$30.00

To register please contact: Max Bini, Tertiary Education Consultant, Vision Australia Phone: 1300 847 466 or email: [max.bini@visionaustralia.org](mailto:max.bini@visionaustralia.org)

### **Touch Typing Software**

Leanne Nagel has found a website with loads of software and ideas for teaching touch typing. To find out more go to: All the Touch Typing Tutors [http://typingsoft.com/all\\_typing\\_tutors.htm](http://typingsoft.com/all_typing_tutors.htm)

## The Family Centre on Technology and Disability

The Family Centre is a resource designed to support organizations and programs that work with families of children and youth with disabilities. They offer a range of information and services on the subject of Assistive Technologies (AT).

### Family Centre Resources Include:

- AT Resources CD Rom - Looking for disability organizations, articles about AT, transcripts from online discussions...You'll find it all here! The Family Centre compiles all of its resources onto one accessible and information-rich CD-Rom.
- FCTD Online Conference Series - Every other month nationally recognized experts lead month-long online discussions on a range of AT topics. Consumers, families, friends and professionals are encouraged to participate. Share your questions, comments, experiences and concerns or just listen-in. Hear from others working in the field. Learn from the experts.
- Monthly Newsletters - FCTD News & Notes brings you timely articles on a wide range of AT topics from inclusion to planning a summer vacation for a special needs child. Each issue features interviews with experts, profiles of the Family Centre's member organizations and additional assistive technology resources.
- Resource Review Database - This fully-searchable database contains hundreds of reviews of books, articles, research and other materials of interest and utility to families of children with disabilities.
- Member Database - Information on more than 1,200 disability organizations searchable by state, type of organization and target disability.

The Family Centre on Technology and Disability can be found at <http://www.fctd.info/>

## In The Driver's Seat

In The Driver's Seat will be happening again next year on Sunday 5th April 2009. Registrations will be taken from Monday 17th November 2008. So if you know anyone who is at least 16 years of age, is legally blind and would like to experience driving around Sandown Racecourse with an experienced driving instructor please let them know. If you are unfamiliar with the "In Driver's Seat" project here is a little more information:

This event is a project of the Lions Club of Warrandyte Inc and provides people who are legally blind an opportunity to drive a motor vehicle. Driving school instructors from independent driving schools will offer their time and vehicles free of charge. The driving instructor will sit beside the blind or vision impaired person (V.I.P.) and talks him/her around the circuit. Each participant will be allotted a half-hour segment, and for some, this will be their first experience being 'In the Driver's Seat.' Minimum age for participants is 16 years.

This event is generously supported by the Ulysses and Shearwater & Yarra Ranges Motor Cycle Groups, the Vintage Driver's Club and the 49-59 Ford Custom line Club who will provide rides in their vehicles around the car park and surrounding access roads.

Participants are invited to bring family and friends to share the day. Family and friends are permitted to ride on bikes, and in vintage and Ford custom line vehicles, but the blind and vision impaired participants have priority at all times.

The day will begin at 9.00am and concludes with a presentation at 3.30pm. The Lions Club Warrandyte will provide a barbecue, tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the day for all free of charge. The Victorian Automobile Chambers of Commerce's generous sponsorship will provide the hire of Sandown. To register, contact PeterWatts on (03) 9844 3903 or email

[peterwatts1@bigpond.com](mailto:peterwatts1@bigpond.com)

Source: <http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/news-events-events.cfm?id=1976&t=/in-the-drivers-seat-2008/>

## Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference

### Surf's Up! The 9th biennial Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference in Southern California!

Mark your calendars now and plan to join in for this international event 12-15 November 2009. The focus is on literacy for individuals with visual impairments of all ages and developmental levels. This is your opportunity to share your research and innovations and to learn practical solutions to better serve individuals who are blind, visually impaired or deaf-blind.

**Getting In Touch With Literacy (GITWL) '09** will focus on all forms of literacy, including print, braille, auditory, tactile graphics comprehension and the use of assistive technology. Presentations will address the needs of a range of ages and all levels of ability, including conventional and functional literacy.

Experience the joy of reading and writing in braille, large print, digital audio, technology or whatever medium meets your needs! The CALL FOR PROPOSALS online form is now available. Proposals will be due February 1, 2009. For more information about this exciting conference go to: <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com>

## Trekker Breeze – GPS Navigation

Having just experienced the wonders of GPS navigation myself I can appreciate what a hit this technology must be for people with vision impairments. This article from HumanWare explains more:

HumanWare is now shipping Trekker Breeze, a state-of-the-art talking GPS specially designed for the needs of vision-impaired users. This simple orientation tool is designed for use when traveling in familiar surroundings or pre-defined routes. The product will also be appealing to people not comfortable with computers and screen readers. The new model is an addition to our popular Trekker and BrailleNote GPS systems, which have thousands of users worldwide. With this innovation, HumanWare will make GPS technology even more accessible to a greater number of people.

The Trekker Breeze is available for purchase at an affordable price of AU\$1095. The product is available in English, French, Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian. Like other GPS products from HumanWare, the Trekker Breeze provides talking GPS directions that help users know where they are, where they are going and what is around them.

Trekker Breeze enhances autonomy and confidence in traveling and makes learning new routes easier. Whilst walking, users receive audible information, such as street names, intersections and reference landmarks. In case they are lost, they can retrace their steps. Users can also record routes, and activate them for future use. They can also reach favourite destinations with turn-by-turn instructions. The product provides rich navigational information adapted to pedestrian or in-vehicle travel. It makes it easier to travel alone, and allows people to discover and enjoy their surroundings. "GPS technology brings great benefits to vision-impaired travelers. With this new addition to our product line, Humanware now offers GPS benefits to a larger number of the vision-impaired population," says Lucia Gomez, Product Manager. "Easy and intuitive, Trekker Breeze offers basic orientation functions in an all-in-one hand size device. It is also the most affordable GPS tool specially designed for the needs of users who are blind."

HumanWare offers the most complete line of GPS tools for visually impaired people. The line includes the popular BrailleNote GPS and Trekker. BrailleNote GPS is a full-featured GPS tool that integrates seamlessly with KeySoft. It is available with any of the BrailleNote family of products. BrailleNote GPS benefits from the highly efficient and easy-to-learn KeySoft interface. Sleek and discreet, Trekker is a powerful GPS solution running on a mainstream palm-size PDA. Trekker is

highly appealing to professionals and students already familiar with computers and screen readers.

"Trekker Breeze will make the potential of GPS technology even more accessible to the blind," says Lucia Gomez. Since its launch in July, the product is raising deep interest amongst leading orientation and mobility organizations.

Humanware has partnered with Leader Dogs for the Blind, the first dog guide school in the United States to permanently integrate a talking GPS navigational tool into dog guide classes for people who are blind and vision-impaired. "Combining the renowned expertise of Leader Dogs for the Blind and the Trekker Breeze will significantly enhance the traveling experience of the students. This program is a new chapter of this success story." - Gilles Pepin, CEO of HumanWare.

The BrailleNote GPS and Trekker are currently available from HumanWare. For more information, please call Sam Taylor on (02) 9686 2600 or visit the Humanware web site at <http://www.humanware.com/en-usa/products/gps>

## Vision Impairment Qualifications

Do you have the desire to upgrade your skills in vision impairment? The RIDBC Renwick Centre, affiliated with the University of Newcastle, offer terrific post graduate courses – including “Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies – Specialising in Vision Impairment” and “Master of Special Education – Specialising in Vision Impairment” with subjects as follows in 2009.

Course number and name	Lecturer	Semester in 2009	Delivery/Residential Information
EDUC 6066: Sensory systems, perception and child development	Dr Mike Steer, Fran Gentle	1	Online. No residential
EDUC 6074: Integration and inclusion for students with sensory disabilities	Fran Gentle	1	Online.
EDUC 6068: Specialised curriculum for students with vision impairments	Fran Gentle	2	Online. Residential 3 & 4 October
EDUC 6070: Teaching literacy to vision impaired and blind students	Fran Gentle	2	Online. Residential 6-9 October

We know of two Visiting Teachers who plan to study “Sensory systems, perception and child development” – perhaps you could arrange to become “study buddies”.

Needless to say, the SVRC will support you in your endeavours! Applications for a 2009 commencement are now open.

For further information about the courses offered, scholarships, the handbook etc, check out the Renwick website at <http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/postgraduate.asp>  
Or contact Claire Farmington, email: [Claire.Farrington@RIDBC.org.au](mailto:Claire.Farrington@RIDBC.org.au)

## Round Table Conference 2009 - Call For Papers

A Call for Papers for the 2009 National Conference of the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities, Saturday 30th May - Tuesday 2nd June 2009, is now available on the Round Table web page at <http://www.e-bility.com/roundtable>

Just a reminder for those of you thinking of submitting papers that the closing date for submission of abstracts is Friday the 5th December 2008. Late abstracts will only be considered if there are insufficient suitable abstracts received by due date.

## Guide Dogs Victoria Invitation for Visiting Teachers

The Children's Mobility Team have invited visiting teachers on a tour of the Guide Dog Victoria Campus on Tuesday 16th December as a thank you for their support of guide dogs during the year. The tour will include a visit to the Breeding Centre, Kennels and the Children's Mobility Service facilities. The tour will be followed by lunch at the centre.

Please RSVP to Dean (03) 9854 4506 or Lisa (03) 9854 4467 by Tuesday 9th December.

## SVRC Staff and Student News

This is for all those of you on the road from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) in the U.S. to be read with accent, attitude and a strong beat!

### TVI Slam

7:30, hit the road  
driving through the driving snow  
Got 6 kids I gotta see, ya know  
So I'm drivin' like crazy to and fro.

Got reports to write and parents to call.  
Those 25 kids, gotta see them all.  
Got 5 new evals due this fall  
and teachers stopping me in the hall.

Drive for an hour--the kid's not there.  
Makes me want to pull out my hair!  
Packed outfit, socks, and underwear (ya never know!)  
Driving so much, my tires are bare.

Quarterlies, case notes, and IEP goals  
This paperwork is outta control!  
What?! You want Bill to write his name?  
My girl, he's blind. Are you insane? (maybe)

Walk into meetings, greeted with grins.  
So what is it you do again?  
Braille & Nemeth & sensory stim  
And what about life skills, how 'bout them?

Handwriting, sword fighting, travelling halls  
How to sit down, not bump into walls.  
And what about eating? What's on my plate?  
Sorry. Gotta go. I'm running late!

What about Frank? Should he wear his glasses  
When out on the playground or sitting in classes?  
Can you come and speak to our humble masses?  
4:30? How quickly our time passes!

With thanks to Melinda Schink, TVI (Teacher of the Visually Impaired) from The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

## Christmas Cards

We have some beautiful Christmas cards designed by our students for sale. If you would like to purchase some they are available in packs of 10 for \$5.00. The money raised will go towards sending students to Space Camp in 2009. Postage will be \$1.20 or they can be picked up from the Statewide Vision Resource Centre, 370-380 Springvale Road, Donvale (on the grounds of Heatherwood School). They will also be available for sale at the SVRC EXPO on Friday 28th November.

The black and white copy in the bulletin does not do this picture justice so I will tell you a little about it! We have a message from the student, Rosie to say that she chose black paper so that Santa's white hair would stand out and to show it is at night. The picture shows santa with white hair, red coat and red sleigh flying through the night sky being pulled by a reindeer with impressive antlers and a very red nose. There are yellow stars in the sky and a large, round, white moon in one corner. There is snow on the ground. Thank you Rosie for your lovely picture.

## Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Leanne Nagel, Marion Blazé, Toni Chilton, Jeni Blake 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: [lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au)  
If you would like to receive the bulletin by email please contact: [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au)