

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 20

Friday 19th December 2008

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

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe and
happy new year.

Professional Learning & Activities Term 1, 2009

For workshop sessions, please BYO laptop.

| Professional Learning Events and Activities 2009 | Date |
|--|---------------------|
| Blind Citizens Australia – VCE Forum | Thursday 29 January |
| Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides 1. UEB Braille Maths Code and Maths Layout – 10.00am to 12.30pm Lea Nagel, EMR Senior Visiting Teacher & Maria Elford, Head Braille Transcriber 2. Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson | Friday 6 February |
| Visiting Teacher Day | Monday 9 February |
| New Visiting Teachers – Orientation Day | Tuesday 10 February |
| Educational Support for Blind Students This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who utilise braille | Friday 20 February |
| Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Prep to Year 8 This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who have low vision (maximum participants: 65) | Monday 2 March |

To download more information <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PD2009.doc>

PDI Website

The Victorian Institute of Teaching now has a searchable website for professional development called Pdi. Pdi users can search activities by key word, date of course, provider or mode of attendance to find the activity that suits their needs. The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is in the process of registering our activities on the Pdi website at <http://www.pdi.vic.edu.au>. A copy of the SVRC PD for 2009 and flyers for individual programmes is included with this bulletin.

To download more information <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PD2009.doc>

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Program for Students with Disabilities

Equipment Grants for 2009

Main Points

- Applications are invited for Program for Students with Disabilities – Equipment Grants for 2009.
- Grants are available to assist schools purchase major items of essential specialised equipment for students in the following categories:
 - Students funded prior to 1995 through the previous Regional Integration Committees (Phase 1);
 - Students with a mild visual impairment who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the Program for Students with Disabilities, but for whom specialised items of equipment are essential to enable access to the curriculum.
- Applications must be forwarded to the regional officer by **Friday, 20 February 2009**.
- **N.B. For those students funded since 1995, an equipment component is incorporated in the six levels of funding.**

Additional Information

- In considering the essential specialised equipment requirements of a student with a disability, schools are requested to contact their regional office to ensure that suitable equipment is not in excess at another school. Schools are also requested to notify the regional office of any specialised equipment that is no longer in use.
- For those students funded prior to 1995 (Phase 1), supplementary funds will be considered for positioning equipment required to maintain the student within the school, for example, standing frames, specialised seating or modified tables.
- Applications will need to:
 - demonstrate that the item of equipment is essential to enable the student concerned to access the school's curriculum; and
 - be supported by a recommendation from the visiting teacher indicating the student's visual impairment and ability to use the equipment; and
 - be supported by written documentation from a physiotherapist, where appropriate.
- Applications and enquiries to be forwarded to the appropriate regional officer:

Application forms are available from the SVRC email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

Regional Officer Contacts:

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Eastern Metropolitan Region | Marilyn McKeown | Ph: 8561 2700 |
| Western Metropolitan Region | Judy Baker | Ph: 9292 6500 |
| Southern Metropolitan Region | Joanne Flight | Ph: 9794 3555 |
| Northern Metropolitan Region | Michael Metherell | Ph: 9488 9488 |
| Barwon South Western Region | Andrew Taylor | Ph: 5272 8300 |
| Hume Region | Wendy Fletcher | Ph: 5761 2111 |
| Loddon Mallee Region | Carol Brown | Ph: 5440 3111 |
| Grampians Region | Laura Carrington | Ph: 5337 8444 |
| Gippsland Region | Nicola Stuart | Ph: 5127 0400 |

Blind Citizens Australia:

VCE Forum for students who are vision impaired

Just finished VCE? Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is holding a forum on education, specifically for students who have just completed their VCE, are heading into their final year, or are just starting Year 11.

BCA is keen to hear from students about their experiences in managing class work, completing school assessment coursework (SACs), accessing teaching support, obtaining materials in preferred format, completing exams and much more. This is a great opportunity for parents, visiting teachers and students to provide insight into what is working well and areas that need improvement. This information will form the basis of BCA's policy work.

When: Thursday January 29, 2008
Time: 10.00am-12.30pm followed by a light lunch
Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre,
370 Springvale Road, Donvale
RSVP by: Friday 23 January, 2008 by calling (03) 9654 1400
or emailing jessica.zammit@bca.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia is the peak national advocacy body of
and for people who are blind or vision impaired.

For more information about BCA, visit www.bca.org.au
or contact (03) 9654 1400

Come and Try Fishing Day

Do you like fishing? Would you like to learn how to fish? Vision Australia, Coast Care and Fish Care Victoria are offering a supported fishing day for people who are blind or have low vision.

- **When:** Wednesday 14th January 10am -1pm OR
 - Wednesday 21st January 10am -1pm
- **Where:** Station Pier followed by lunch at Rex Hunts (Own cost)
- Use of all equipment is free. Transport may be available from Kooyong

For further information and to register for this opportunity Contact

Di Hayward

Recreation Development worker (Eastern Region)

Phone (03) 9760 0006

Blind Person's Travel Pass

Has your student's Blind Person's Travel Pass expired? No problem! Staff of the Public Transport Corporation assure us that people can continue to use their Pass even though it has expired and when the new Myki Cards come into use, eligible people will be sent a Myki Card for their use! For more information please phone: (03) 9619 1159.

Vacancy

A vacancy exists in 2009 for a 0.5 braille aide in a Yarraville school - Wembley Primary School. Please contact Steve Warner on 0425 729304.

Audio Description

The following is a list of some of the MTC Productions which will have audio descriptions in 2009.

Grace. Noni Hazelhurst. Fairfax Studio

Tuesday 3 February 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 7 February 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
Grace Friedman has become the country's most vocal advocate for atheism. Her son becomes an Anglican priest. Then tragedy strikes.

Poor Boy. Guy Pearce. The New Sumner Theatre

Tuesday 17 February 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 21 February 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
Jem Glass announces on his 7th Birthday that he is really a grown man called Danny who died some years ago.

Moonlight & Magnolias. Hayden Spencer. Playhouse Theatre

Tuesday 10 March 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 14 March 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
The greatest Hollywood Movie has script troubles, and David O Selznick is bleeding a fortune. The script must be fixed.

The Year of Magical Thinking. Robyn Nevin. Fairfax Studio

Tuesday 31 March 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 4 April 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
Joan Didion, one of America's most perceptive novelists, suffers a cruel irony of life when her beloved husband and only child die.

Realism. Stephen Phillips, Miriam Margolyes. Sumner Theatre

Tuesday 5 May 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 9 May 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
In a small Moscow Theatre in 1939, actors begin rehearsal of a new play to commemorate Stalin's 60th Birthday.

August: Osage County. Robert Menzies, Playhouse Theatre

Tuesday 9 June 6.30 P.M. and Saturday 13 June 4.00 P.M. with Tactile Tour 3.00 P.M.
Good or bad, family is family, so when the old man goes missing, everyone has to haul their burdens of resentment home to Osage.

For tickets phone EASE ticket service (03) 9699 8497

Our 2008 Access Technology Expo – Report by Marion and Deb

You wouldn't have recognized the Resource Centre on Friday, with the furniture completely rearranged, powerboards and extension cords everywhere and over 100 visitors coming and going throughout the day.

It was time for the 2008 Expo and the latest in technology was displayed and demonstrated by Humanware, Quantum Technology, Pacific Vision and Micro Marvelous. The Mimio man (from IBS Audio Visual) hardly had time for a lunch break. European Eyewear and Soundbooks showed their latest, and Vision Australia, the Blind Sports Association and Guide Dogs Victoria displayed aids and equipment and talked about their services.

The day was enjoyed by Visiting Teachers from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Catholic Education Office and Vision Australia. There were also many parents, students and soon-to-be students (quite a few 2009 preppies came through with their families), aides and members of the general public, some of whom found out about the Expo through our wonderful website and an article in the local paper. We had 69 names on our register but, from discussions with presenters, there were probably closer to 150 people there on the day.

I'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to our ever-busy SVRC staff who slaved away setting up, keeping things moving, directing traffic, making food appear and disappear and being so friendly throughout it all. They even rearranged all the furniture before my arrival back on Monday morning, and were setting up the colour-coordinated decorations for our next SVRC event, the annual Christmas morning tea! They really are a fantastic team.

Expo was also the scene of presentations to the winners of the SVRC WriteOn Writing Competition. SVRC volunteer (and former VT student) Bryony organised WriteOn this year as a way of encouraging our students to read and write more – she has a passion for reading and writing that she would like to instil in others!

WriteOn was kindly sponsored by a number of sellers of literature in alternative format including:

- Bolinda
- Louis Braille Audio
- Readings Bookstore and
- Soundbooks

Around 40 entries were received written by students from all over the state – stories, poems, journals etc etc – and the panel of judges really struggled with the job of awarding prizes!

And in case you missed the winners in the last bulletin here they are again:

Lower Primary

- Mathew: Best Non-fiction Work for “My Favourite Things Journal”
Prize: Soundbook prize “Best of Paddington”
- Rohan: Best Story for “Hairy No Teeth Toad Monster”
Prize: \$30 voucher from Readings
- Scott: Best Poem for “Tractors”
Prize: Bolinda book “Flashback – Adventures of a Film Horse”
- Isabelle: Highly Commended for “Panda's Adventures”

Upper Primary:

- Abbey: Best Story for “Stuck in the Middle”
Prize: Louis Braille audio voucher to pick any book she wants
- Alexandra: Best Non-fiction for “The Inside Story”
Prize: \$30 voucher from Readings
- Aaron: Most Imaginative Piece for “Spot the Space Dog”
Prize: Bolinda Audiobook “Keys to the Kingdom: Drowned Wednesday”
- George: Highly Commended for “TooCool: Hammeringmaster”

Secondary:

- Georgia: First Prize for “My Favourite Things”
Prize: Louis Braille Audio voucher for book of her choice AND Bolinda Audiobook "Boy Overboard"
- Hansani: Second place for “Blue Blossoms”
Prize: Bolinda Audiobook “Blueback”
- Cassie: Third place for “Like a Burden”
Prize: Soundbooks “To Kill a Mockingbird”

Many thanks to Bry for organizing WriteOn and to our judging panel. We are especially indebted to our sponsors Bolinda, Louis Braille Audio, Readings and Soundbooks!

Student Writing

The following story from Alexander won Best Non-fiction story in the Upper Primary section.

The Inside Story by Alexandra, Year 4

My favourite thing is listening to my dad's life story

My dad's mum was born in 1904 his dad was born 1901

My dad was born in 1941 he is the last of 8 children.

The children names are Tom, Vasiliky, Maria, Bill, George, Soula, Costa, John.

My dad was born in the time of the war so it was pretty hard for them, but Vasiliky was 17 and was old enough to do work on the fields.

My grandparents, every day went to work, children went to school.

One day after school the boys went to play in the fields, my dad only 4 at the time ran after them.

Suddenly they saw a bomb.

Curious as they were, picked it up and took it home.

Granddad worried, took it away and hid it.

Next day after school they searched to find the bomb, looked everywhere until they found it

Took it to the fields and lit it up.

They ran for cover and waited, after 15 minutes the bomb didn't explode

They started to go towards the bomb, slowly when almost there... Boom!

The bomb exploded.

George was knocked by the pressure, he hurt his eyes, he went totally blind at the age of 9 years old because doctors could do nothing at that time.

When he was twelve he went to the blind school in Athens

When he was older he became a telephone operator.

He became a father and a grandfather: he's a great uncle to me.

I met him 3 years ago at the age off 72 and what I found out?

That he was an active person for the blind association of Greece.

He modified the working hours and conditions by putting a legislation to the government.

My father is extremely proud of his older brother for all the things he has done with his life and in the mean time he could help others.

This is one of the stories my dad shared with me sitting comfortably in his arms.

He is getting old and he might not remember

but the memories of past will never be lost

His donkey named vango, his dog zoro

Kopella the horse of course!

they made life great!

like his 3 best mates!

and that's the end of my favourite thing sharing time with my dad and my family.

Alexandra

November 2008

Parent Support Group Meeting

From Helen Caldwell

Helen has arranged for paralympian Ian Speed to speak at the next Parent Support Group meeting on Saturday the 28th of March 2009 at 2.00 PM. This is a great opportunity for students and parents to come along and hear a very motivating speaker. Ian is a runner, a husband, father and a lawyer. He will speak about his life experience and that of being an athlete along side sighted peers and vision impaired athletes.

Of Web Pages and Navigation

Here are some thoughts from JAWS user, Robert Leslie Newman, about how he approaches navigating web pages.

Over the years I have learned that there are several different types of web pages in respects to how they have been arranged, formatted and once on a new page I need to discover which kind of page it is and that then will dictate which strategy I will use to navigate, read it. For example- Some pages are sectioned off by use of headings. Some are mainly a long list of links with little to no text between them. Some are constructed to provide forms, edit boxes and other controls for gathering your input to do something that the page is offering. Another type is one in which there is a presentation of information which has been laid out via one or more tables. And of course, some are a mixture of any or all of these format features.

So usually on a new page, I get on it and allow JAWS to scroll and read, giving me a short preview of how the page has been constructed. If I see that it is heavy with links, I'll either tab through, which takes you from link to link where you listen to its short description or if when touring the page by allowing it to run on (JAWS doing its continuous read thing and if I hear a link that I know I want to go back to, I'll stop JAWS with the control key, then press insert F7 (links list) and press the first letter of the link that I want to go to until I hear it, then press enter to get there. Also, as a general rule, when the new page is coming up and you hear it starting to read, usually it is not the material that you are looking for and the quickest way (normally) is to press the letter N and it will expedite the loading and positioning you to the part of the page you are looking for. (N normally takes you to the next section of text where there are 25 words or more, but also if I am understanding its function, it also takes you to the top of the newly loading page; either way, most times it truly helps you to get to that new page quicker.)

I like to see if a page has headings; they generally are used to divide sections of a page. Google uses headings on their search result pages; H will take you to each, next item that has been found.

On a page that I hear or know that has input fields that I need to fill out, I'll press insert F5 and bring up a "forms list". This is a very handy method to get those input controls up on the screen and in order as they appear within the page and of course, in the order in which you need to fill them out. (As you are filling out a edit field or check something and you can either tab to the next control or do the insert F5 again to get there (there are other navigation keys which will work if forms mode is not on, like the letter e that will take you to the next edit box and the letter F which will take you to the next form field). And, if you find that as you are moving from one input field to another and JAWS is not able to read the titles for the box or control that you are moving into, bringing up the forms list is a way to get them identified.

(One of my favorite tactics is to use the find command (control F) to locate a word or phrase and so help me get there quicker (it will search the entire page you are on; pressing F3 will repeat the same search).

And again, as Larry Lewis mentioned, JAWS has a list of navigation keys, which are normally single letters that you can use to jump ahead or backwards from one formatting feature to another. And these insert F5 (forms list) or F7 (links list) or F8 (allows you to get to the buttons on the toolbar) or F9 (frames list), etc. And it takes some experimentation to see what they will do and if they are doing what you need.

You will find that like in most computer usage, each of us finds a method that suits our personal style. So that is my quick donation to this discussion.

Robert Leslie Newman

Email- newmanrl@cox.net

THOUGHT PROVOKER Website-

[Http://www.thoughtprovoker.info](http://www.thoughtprovoker.info)

Many thanks to Robert for his contribution.

Louis Braille The Musical

This came from the "ozbrl" list from Kathy.

In celebration of the Louis Braille Bicentenary, the students at South Australian School for Vision Impaired presented a short musical "Louis Braille" on December 9th as part of their Presentation Night for parents and friends. This musical was written by the students during workshops over the year with the assistance of David Vinall their music teacher. A narrator told the story of Louis Braille and this was interspersed with simple songs and movement highlighting each part of the story.

Two examples written by the students were:

The "Dot" Song:

Put a dot over here and a dot over there,
Making the letters with dots everywhere.

Here a dot there a dot

Everywhere a dot dot.

Dot code dot code,

Bumpy dots running under my fingertips.

So much that I want to learn.

"Dot Victory" - Chant

Look! Look!

Dots ev'rywhere,

Making words, numbers and music,

a, b, c, d, 1, 2, 3, 4,

Yeah!

East Melbourne Optometry & Low Vision Centre: Update

The following information has been provided by Alan Johnston from the East Melbourne Optometry & Low Vision Centre:

Consultations for all children are bulk billed to Medicare, so there is (almost always) no cost for attendance (no means test for parents). The following is not free however: retinal imaging attracts a charge that is not recoverable from medicare (even for ophthalmologists).

RRP is \$47 for optometry, we charge \$28. This is not usually necessary unless a child has not had any ophthalmological management for years.

Magnifiers, specs and other appliances are charged at the RRP, but some appliances have been reimbursed in the past from ancillary cover if a parent has extras with their private health insurer.

We have a small range of quality spectacle frames, but more often than not we re-use a patients own frame when in good order. Lens costs vary according to the material and prescription.

For more information contact the centre on (03) 9654 1335

Finally

Thanks to Gabby Graf, Rita Farrelly, Odette Budge, Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Leanne Nagle, Helen Caldwell and all those who contributed to this, the last edition, of The Bulletin for 2008.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the proof reading and mail out. I hope you enjoy a well earned rest and I look forward to hearing from you in the new year!

Lyn Robinson

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