

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

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**Number 3**
**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009**


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

### Professional Development Activities for Term 1, 2009

Professional Development Event 2009 (see attached for programs)	Date
<b>Educational Support for Students with Low Vision – Secondary Students</b> This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support secondary students who have low vision (maximum participants: 60)	Friday 20 March
<b>Dot Power for Kinder and Prep Braille Readers</b>	Monday 30 March

For a complete list of the Professional Development offered by the SVRC go to:

<http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/PD2009.doc>

### Educational Support for Students with Low Vision: Prep-Year 8 Report by Marion Blazé

Yesterday (March 2) the SVRC was full to capacity as we conducted the largest of our PD days for class teachers and aides. Over 70 participants started the day wearing goggles and taking part in activities designed to demonstrate what it can be like to be vision impaired in school.

The highlight of the day, was as always, the panel of very impressive young boys who told their own stories. You could hear a pin drop when Dylan, George and Jarrod demonstrated their special equipment and even showed off a very classy PowerPoint. Comments on evaluation sheets were enthusiastically positive: e.g. 'the best PD ever', 'fantastic', 'I will leave with a lot more confidence and resources', 'empowering and insightful'. Thanks again to our ever-hardworking and invisible SVRC team who even had to venture outside to get to the toilets, because of the difficulties getting through the crowd!

Just a reminder that we will be running a similar programme for school staff working with students in secondary schools on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. A few places are still available!

Flyer attached.

### Inside This Issue

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## SVRC Perkins Brailers

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre owns a number of Perkins brailers, most of which are out in schools. As our professional development programs grow and grow, and braille students come in for our "Dot Power" days, we have a greater need for these brailers here at the Centre.

**From the beginning of term 3, the Statewide Vision Resource Centre will charge an annual leasing fee of \$200 to schools for the use of Perkins brailers. Accounts for \$100 will be sent to schools towards the end of term 2 for the remainder of 2009.**

**Please note:** Perkins brailers can be purchased from Vision Australia's Equipment Solutions for approximately \$1,232 (ES4050). Vision Australia also lease Perkins brailers - contact them on 9822 1111.

Also, a rare 'Jumbo' Perkins braille has gone missing. It is probably out there somewhere and its user doesn't realise it produces 'jumbo' size cells. The dots are no bigger but form a larger cell. PLEASE check the brailers being used in your schools. If the cell is bigger than usual, you may have the Jumbo braille we are looking for AND we want any other brailers back, to meet the growing demand of people wanting to learn braille.

A reward will be offered to the finder of the Jumbo Braille! Contact Marion on 9841 0807.

## Role of Educational Psychologist at SVRC

As you are all no doubt aware Geoff Bowen has officially retired but thankfully he has returned to SVRC for two days a week. Geoff has been offered additional work at other facilities so his time with us is precious. He has a heavy commitment to the Educational Vision Assessment Clinic and following up with issues that arise from these appointments and to the SVRC Professional Development Program.

Through this year Geoff will be making contact with other psychologists in the state and inviting them to attend a professional development program aimed specifically at maintaining their skill base but with an emphasis on low vision and blindness. Working two days a week with us will limit the amount of time he has to offer for individual counselling of students and staff. He will still be available for case conferencing and phone consultation.

## Teaching Students with Sensory Impairments: Strategies for Mainstream Teachers.

**Editors: Dr. Karen Waldron, Dr. Michael Steer and Michael McGlasson**

**Website Address** <http://www.trinity.edu/org/sensoryimpairments/index.htm>

This project is the result of an international, collaborative effort among educators in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, who work with students with vision or hearing impairments. The aim of the website is to provide a resource for professionals, parents, and university students involved in fully including students with sensory impairments in our educational systems.

The main links from the home page include:

- Inclusion
- Definitions, Identification, and Professionals
- Technological and Medical Interventions
- Teaching Strategies and Accommodations
- Social Skills
- Counseling
- Activities
- Working with Families
- Research and Reflections

There is some very useful and practical information here including ideas for social skills and etiquette when working with students who are blind or vision impaired.

Following is just one example of the type of material that is available from this website.

## Initiating Friendships – The Circle of Friends Process

Written By Dolly Bhargava, M. Spec. Ed., Renwick College

While it is not possible to force friendships, it is possible to create opportunities that encourage friendships to develop. Students with vision impairment benefit from specific assistance with fitting into the school's social environment. The *Circle of Friends* (Perske & Perske, 1988) is an approach that can be used to make opportunities for friendship available to the student with vision impairment.

*Circle of Friends* is a support structure that aims to assist the student who is having difficulties with making friends. The object is to make sure the student is included in activities and feel a part of a group. The process provides peer support, encouragement and friendship to the student.

### How do you set it up?

1. As a group discuss with all students the importance of friendships and what it would be like not to have friends. Inform them you will be starting a program called *Circle of Friends*. This program will assist students who would like to make new friends, but for a number of reasons are finding it difficult. Ask students to volunteer for this program. Encourage those students to join who would like to make friends. Alternatively, you could ask all students in the class to be involved in the *Circle of Friends* program so as not to single out the students who have no friends.
2. Once the students who would like to volunteer have been identified, set a meeting time where you can begin the program. In the meeting

Draw 3 concentric circles on a chart.

The inner circle should represent the student with vision impairment. The student's name should be written in that circle.

The second circle should include names of friends of the student with vision impairment.

The outermost circle should be filled with names of classmates who would like to volunteer and act as "social helpers" (mentors).

If friendships develop, the classmates who were initially volunteers can move into the second circle. As "social helpers," their role is to assist the student in feeling a part of the school community. The "social helpers" can be assigned responsibilities of assisting the student in different school location areas. For example, all "social helpers" have to greet the student, be friendly and helpful to the student as appropriate throughout the day. Some "social helpers" can help the student on the playground, whereas others can be responsible for helping the student in the cafeteria, and so on. Along with assisting the student with vision impairment, encourage the "social helpers" to think of ways in which they can become true friends.

NOTE: It is important that the "social helpers" are provided support and given opportunities to talk. Initially, a weekly meeting needs to be organised so that they have the opportunity to talk about the good things that happened during the week and to discuss issues that may have arisen. Suggestions on how to deal with problems can be provided.

Source: <http://www.trinity.edu/org/sensoryimpairments/VI/SS/VI%20-%20Ch%206-%20III-%20Initiating%20Friendships.doc>

## REC – SPO – ONE

### Presented by Blind Sports Victoria and Vision Australia

Do you know anyone with a vision impairment who would like to find out more about the various recreational and sporting options available? Have they ever wondered what its like to play Swish, Goalball, Golf, Tenpin, Tennis, Bowls, or even ride a tandem? What about Scrabble, backgammon, chess or perhaps they are rather crafty and would like to try silk painting, pottery or learn to knit. The above are a sample of some of the activities Blind Sports Victoria and Vision Australia hope to have available on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

**Where** Vision Australia, 454 Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong

**Time:** 11am until 2.30pm Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009 includes a sausage sizzle

**Cost:** Gold coin donation (to Blind Sports Victoria) – Goodie bag available at Registration Area.

For further information and to register for this exciting day please contact.

Di Hayward (Vision Australia) Phone 9760 0006 **OR**

Hazel Hockley (Blind Sports Victoria) Phone 9822 8876

## Monash By Bike

The City of Monash and Bicycle Victoria, which aims to promote bike riding in the city of Monash, are running a bike day on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April. This event is open to the public and Vision Australia has been invited to participate and provide support for people with a vision impairment who may wish to attend. The start will be from the Caloola Reserve in Oakleigh and this event will give individuals with vision impairments the opportunity to ride part of the Scotchman Creek trail in an organized group.

There will be two rides 9 kms and 16 kms and Vision Australia are hoping to be able to participate in both. Di Hayward, Recreational Development Worker at Vision Australia is asking for expressions of interest from both people who are blind or have low vision and volunteers who would be happy to front the ride.

If you would like to discuss this event further please feel free to contact Di on Phone: 9760 0006.

## SAVE THE LODGE BBQ!! Family Fun Day

If you are interested in preserving the RVIB Ski Lodge at Mount Baw Baw for the use of people with vision impairments and their families then you may be able to assist with this call to action! From the committee comes this plea ...

Calling all members, past and present and anyone who has an interest in the lodge!! Bring a friend and join with us!! Come and find out what's happening and how you can help keep the lodge going.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Helen Keller.

### Family Fun Day

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Followed by an Extraordinary Members Meeting all welcome.

Blind Cricket Sports Pavilion, rear of 454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong Victoria. 3144

Cost: \$8 adults and \$4 children (2-16) or \$20 for the family.

FREE face painting, and showbags for the kids!!!

Includes all you can eat BBQ lunch with home made salads and desserts.

Drinks will be available for purchase on the day.

RSVP by 8<sup>th</sup> of March for catering and kids activities.

RSVP to the committee at [president@rvibski.com.au](mailto:president@rvibski.com.au)

## Zoom-Ex

Zoom-Ex is a multi-tasking electronic low vision device that can magnify, scan and capture documents. The captured documents can later be read on computer using a synthetic voice. Zoom-Ex is a combination of an instant scanner and OCR. It allows you to convert any printed text into multiple accessible formats like speech, large print, sound or text file in seconds. Zoom-Ex is easy to use: the foldable stand holds a digital scanning camera that is always at the exact distance needed to create a clear image. Low vision users know exactly where to place the material to be read because they can touch and feel an L-shaped edge on the stand

As a Smart Magnifier Zoom-Ex separates pictures from text and presents them separately, with separate adjustable magnification. Zoom-Ex will magnify the text and wrap the lines on your computer screen for easy reading. Just scroll-down, an X-Y table is no longer needed and lines will not run off the screen.

Vision impaired users may select different ways of viewing magnified text:

- Text may be shown as a continuous running line. You can control how fast or slow the line moves
- Color combinations of text and the background - [See a few examples](#)
- Magnify text as much or as little as you need ( up to 40X)
- Magnify your text, print it and make your own "large print books"

Source: <http://abisee.com/index.html>

## Study Group 2009

All current and prospective tertiary students who are blind or vision impaired are welcome:

- Feel more confident about your studies.
- Gain a better understanding of the tertiary environment.
- Learn about on and off-campus services.
- Meet other students who are blind or vision impaired.
- Develop a range of effective study skills.

All seminars held at Vision Australia 201 High Street Prahran from 1:30-4:00 pm on the third Wednesday of the month.

Date	Topic
18 Mar	Tutorial Discussions and Note Taking
15 Apr	Referencing Tips and Online Research
20 May	Writing for Academic Purposes
17 Jun	Exam Preparation
15 Jul	Course and Career Identification
19 Aug	VTAC and direct course application processes
16 Sep	Exam preparation and study strategies
21 Oct	Methods for reading using alternative formats
18 Nov	Where to from here? Transitioning to employment

These topics are a basis of discussion and may change, students are free to raise issues which are pertinent to their studies.

Max Bini - Tertiary Education Consultant Phone: 1300 847 466

Email: [max.bini@visionaustralia.org](mailto:max.bini@visionaustralia.org)

## Two New David Hornsby & Debbie Sukarna Workshops

### Comprehension and Strategies for Reading Fiction

Prep-Year 2 with David Hornsby	Years 3–6 with Debbie Sukarna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The different strands of a balanced reading program in P-2 classrooms</li> <li>• The essential language-experience strand</li> <li>• Using shared reading to demonstrate and teach reading strategies and guided reading for children to <i>use</i> these strategies</li> <li>• Revisiting the reading process (how <i>do</i> children learn to read?)</li> <li>• The central place of literature that touches the heart and the mind</li> <li>• Comprehending as a thinking / feeling process; comprehension as a product.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is comprehension?</li> <li>• Teaching for deeper level comprehension</li> <li>• Developing strategic readers using practical teaching procedures</li> <li>• Planning for small group teaching</li> <li>• Revisiting the reading process (how <i>do</i> children learn to read?)</li> <li>• The central place of literature that touches the heart and the mind</li> <li>• Comprehending as a thinking / feeling process; comprehension as a product</li> </ul>

**Note: This program will focus on fiction. Non-fiction will be addressed in further Saturday programs**

**Program:** 9:30am Registration, tea & coffee 10.00 am Start 3.15 pm Finish

**Venue:** Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Cnr Bell St & St Georges Rd, Preston

**Cost:** \$170 or \$150 per person (Inc GST) for two or more participants from the one school

### Planning An Integrated Unit: For Prep to Year 6 Teachers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the stages of inquiry through practical units of work</li> <li>• Strengthening the quality of unit planning</li> <li>• Literacy learning through integrated units</li> <li>• Planning the literacy program as we plan an inquiry unit</li> <li>• Practical teaching procedures for literacy learning</li> <li>• The essential place of literature in inquiry</li> <li>• Helping students meet the literacy demands</li> <li>• Opportunities for assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>All participants are asked to bring a copy of a Unit of Work from their own school</b></p>

**Program: 9:30am** Registration, tea & coffee **10.00 am** Start **3.15 pm** Finish

**Venue:** Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Cnr Bell St & St Georges Rd, Preston

**Cost:** \$170 or \$150 per person (inc gst) for two or more participants from the one school (morning tea, lunch and hand-outs provided)

**Enquiries for both workshops:**

Paula Welham Tel/Fax: (03) 9499 2065 Mob: 0402 421 864 Email: [pwelham@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pwelham@bigpond.net.au)

## Reminder: Parent Support Group: Saturday 28th March

Just a reminder that the Parent Support Group meeting is coming up on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Ian Speed, olympian, lawyer, husband, father of two young daughters who also happens to have a vision impairment will be the guest speaker. The parent support group meets only three times a year, so don't miss this opportunity to catch up with other parents and listen to an inspiring speaker. Starting time is 2:00 with baby sitters and afternoon tea being provided.

If any Visiting Teachers (or parents) have any suggestions for speakers, or issues you would like as topics please contact either Marion or Annette on (03) 9841 0807.

## Australian Braille Authority (ABA)

From Leona Holloway, ABA Executive Secretary.

As you may be aware, the Victorian Subcommittee of the Australian Braille Authority has been in recess for the last year. A small group of Victorians have formed a working group to bring this valuable subcommittee back into existence but we need your help!

We would love to hear from anyone who is interested in participating in the Victorian Subcommittee, whether that be as an organiser, participant at meetings/workshops/social events, or just to make a suggestion about how we can best meet the needs of our members. Please also spread the word to other Victorians who are interested in braille!

For more information contact Allen Egerton (03) 9864 9674 OR email [allen.egerton@visionaustralia.org](mailto:allen.egerton@visionaustralia.org)

## Staff & Student News

- Maria's daughter has given birth to a baby boy, Maurice James. Mother, baby and grandmother are doing well.
- Comings and Goings at the SVRC: Kishan, Cam and Nicole have returned to their studies at University – you may still see them during the holidays or at other times when they are able to work for us. We have a new staff member Lisa who will be working in the braille/e-text sections of the SVRC. Welcome Lisa.
- Eastern region student, George has a new dog. His mum brought "Honey" a 9 week old poodle/shitzu/malteese cross, to see us when she dropped in George's books recently. Good luck with the puppy training George – keep us up to date with how you are going!

## Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Geoff Bowen, Mike Steer, 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:

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

# Statewide Vision Resource Centre

presents

## Educational Support for Students with Low Vision Secondary Students

**When:** Friday 20 March 2009 from 9.00am to 3.30pm (Registration from 8.30am)

**Where:** Statewide Vision Resource Centre  
**370-380 Springvale Rd Donvale**

**Parking:** Next door at the Donvale Sports Complex (lower carpark)

**For:** class teachers, subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, family members and visiting teachers.

8.30	Registration
9.00	Simulation of a Vision Impairment – Staff of the SVRC & Guide Dogs Victoria
10.15	Morning Tea
10.45	Welcome – Marion Blazé, Education Officer, SVRC
11.00	Strategies to Support the Student with Low Vision in the Classroom – Helen Caldwell, Visiting Teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region
11.45	School and Beyond – Assisting Students to Gain Employment – Marion Blazé, Education Officer, SVRC
12.30	Access Technology: Show and Tell – Deb Lewis, Co-ordinator, SVRC
12.45	Success in the Secondary School! – Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher, Eastern Metropolitan Region
1.00	Lunch
1.45	VCE Special Provision – Lyn Robinson, Vision Resource Teacher, SVRC
2.15	The Vision Impaired Student in Your Classroom – Individual, Social and Family Perspectives – Geoff Bowen, Psychologist, SVRC
3.00	A Student Perspective: Students Describe their Experience of School
3.30	Close

**Cost: \$44.00 incl. GST (DE&T Visiting Teachers \$33.00)**

**Note: Maximum participants: 65**

**Payment includes a light lunch.**

**Registration is ESSENTIAL by Wednesday 18 March 2009**

**To register or for further details or an invoice: Phone 9841 0242, Fax 9841 0878 or Email [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au)**