

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 4

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009

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

### Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2009

Professional Development Event 2009	Date
<b>*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students</b> <b>1. Mountbatten</b> – 10.00am to 11.30am Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology <b>2. BrailleNote</b> – 11.45am to 1.15pm Ramona Mandy, Humanware <b>3. Computer without the Mouse</b> – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher	Wednesday 29 April
<b>Educational Support for Vision Impaired Students with Additional Impairments</b> This day is designed for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support vision impaired students who have additional impairments (maximum participants: 60)	Friday 1 May
<b>Education Week Activity – "Louis Day"</b> (200 year anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille)	TBA May
<b>*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc</b> <b>1. WindowEyes</b> – 10.00am to 11.30am Ramona Mandy, Humanware <b>2. MAGic</b> – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology <b>3. Introduction to the SVRC 'Tool Kit'</b> – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 13 May
<b>Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day</b>	Tuesday 19 May
<b>*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc</b> <b>1. JAWS</b> – 10.00am to 11.30am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher <b>2. PACMate</b> – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology <b>3. A Week in the Life of a VT.</b> Lea Nagel and staff of the SVRC.	Thursday 28 May
<b>*Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students</b> <b>1. Computer Without the Mouse</b> – 9.45am to 11.15am Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher <b>2. ZoomText (Talking and Enlarging Software)</b> – 11.45am to 1.15pm Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology <b>3. Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users</b> – 1.30pm to 3.00pm Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Thursday 18 June
<b>Dot Power for Kinder and Prep Braille Readers</b>	Monday 22 June

\*All Skill Power days - BYO laptop and lunch.

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

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

### Inside This Issue

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## **Bushfire Appeal for Children's Books**

We were all so sad and shocked to hear of the lives, houses and schools lost in the Black Saturday bushfires. There is one primary school, lost in the fires, with which we have an association because a partially sighted student began his schooling there last year, and even came to our November Expo to be presented with a prize in our story writing competition. The school is Middle Kinglake PS.

We at SVRC would like to begin an appeal for children's books to donate to this school and community. Please bring any books (new or used and in good condition) to SVRC and we will store them until Middle Kinglake PS is ready to receive them.

Having spoken to the Principal today, she is hoping that her school population will be back together in temporary accommodation on the original site, in two weeks time. Apparently many publishers have offered to replace books for the school library, but she said that the families who lost their homes would love to be able to replace books loved by their children.

So, please bring or send any books to SVRC. If sending, please mark clearly that they are for the 'BUSHFIRE BOOK APPEAL' - we don't want to get any braille or other requests muddled up with the books going to Kinglake!

Any questions, call Marion Blaze on 03 9841 0242.

## **Dot Power Program**

Term one, Monday March 30<sup>th</sup> "Dot Power Program" will take place at SVRC. This program is for new Prep children and grade one children who are getting in touch with their Braille skills. The emphasis of this program is on the reading and writing of Braille and we are very excited to introduce the children to the "Ozzie Dots" reading program.

We have an increasing number of children and adults attending these days. This is a fun day with dots and fingers exploring all sorts of different Braille configurations. Our theme for the day will be "Monster" so we are expecting to have lots of fun!

## **Logitech wave keyboards**

From Phillip McKenna

Logitech wave keyboards for PC come with a zoom key that will enlarge the size of the print on the screen in a word document or webpage at the press of a button. You can zoom in or out with ease. They are a USB plugin and it comes with software so I imagine it would work with desktop or notebook. They sell at officeworks for about \$45.00.

## **Sharing the moment**

Morning talk is a chance to practise speaking and listening skills but it is also an opportunity for sharing with others. Children who are blind or have low vision sometimes may not realise that others are engaged in the same activity, they do not see others listening or exploring an object which has been brought in for morning talk. Many teachers show good teaching practise when they allow students to feel an object which is being discussed.

To create a sense of mutual regard it is also a good idea occasionally to allow the blind child to feel the hands, (hand over hand) of another student exploring the object as well as allowing them to feel it for themselves. Sometimes referred to as mutual regard, this strategy provides the opportunity for mutual exploration, building trust and promoting communication between classmates based around a shared experience.

## Living in a Sensory World - Exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum

This exciting exhibition is a joint presentation between Vision Australia and the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. Today, Australians with blindness or low vision participate in every aspect of community life, thanks to developments in education and training, technology, legislation and social change over the past 140 years.

This exhibition gives visitors an understanding of the world of the blindness and low vision community and celebrates their achievements. It features objects from Vision Australia's heritage collection and examples of new technologies which enhance the independence of thousands of Australians.

Objects on show include a cylindrical rotating Braille map created by Australia's RF Tunley in the 1940s; Sonicguide glasses from the 1960s, which used sounds to identify objects; a Taylor slate from the early 20th century that assisted people who were blind to learn maths as well as examples of modern technology such as a phone that can capture text in image form and read it aloud to the user.

Sports also feature in the exhibition. Blind cricket was first officially played in Melbourne in 1922 and the ball from that match, made of woven cane with bottle tops inside, is on display. Also on display is the Judogi or judo jacket worn by Anthony Clarke at the Sydney 2000 Paralympics, as is cyclist Lindy Hou's helmet and jersey.

Interactive and multi-media displays allow the visitor to explore the environment using hearing, touch and smell. *Living in a sensory world* also aims to educate visitors about eye conditions and features one of the latest developments in medical research "The Bionic Eye".



Pictured left is Rita Solomon and her dog Chief, sitting on the beach in 1945.

Rita Solomon (nee Pringle) is believed to be one of the earliest Australians to use dogs for orientation and mobility, doing so even before the first Guide Dogs Centre was established in Perth in 1952.

The exhibition will run in the museum's Australian Communities Gallery throughout 2009. After its year-long run at the Powerhouse Museum, it will tour regional areas. For more information go to the Powerhouse Museum website at: <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/living/>

## February JVIB Online

The February 2009 issue of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)* is available online! You may view the Table of Contents of the issue by going to <http://www.jvib.org>

Featured in this month's issue of *JVIB* is the first installment of the new [Practice Perspectives](#) section. Edited by Jane N. Erin, Ph.D., one of the most respected voices in the field of visual impairment and blindness and editor emerita of the journal, the first column features the unique approaches of three professionals from across the United States and offers creative solutions for supporting reading with learners of all ages. For a limited time only, [Practice Perspectives](#) will be free and available through *JVIB* Online to nonsubscribers and the public at large. Readers are encouraged to forward this message to a friend or colleague who may be interested in reading what Dr. Erin and contributors Lisa Kay Serino of Tucson, Arizona, Charla Rose Houston of Charlotte, North Carolina, and Trina R. Britcher of Huntington, West Virginia, have to say about reluctant braille readers.

Also in this issue, the year-long celebration of Louis Braille's Bicentennial continues with an essay by Sheila Amato, the Council for Exceptional Children 2008 Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year, who shares the challenges and opportunities of teaching braille using an online-education model.

This month's articles and features include:

[Experiences of Parents with Visual Impairments Who Are Raising Children](#)

L. Penny Rosenblum, Sunggye Hong, and Beth Harris

[Characteristics of Individuals with Congenital and Acquired Deaf-Blindness](#)

Dawn M. Dalby, John P. Hirdes, Paul Stolee, J. Graham Strong, Jeff Poss, Erin Y. Tjam, Lindsay Bowman, and Melody Ashworth

[Expanded Core Curriculum: 12 Years Later](#)

Keri L. Lohmeier, Karen Blankenship, and Phil Hatlen

### Practice Report

[Policy Analysis of Science-based Best Practices for Students with Visual Impairments](#)

Tiffany Wild and Ann Allen

### Research Report

[The Functional Classification of Brain Damage-Related Vision Loss](#)

August Colenbrander

Plus Editor's Page; Practice Perspectives, The Case of the Reluctant Reader: Insights from Three Professionals--Jane N. Erin; Braille Celebration, Challenges and Solutions in Teaching Braille in an Online-Education Model--Sheila Amato; From the Field; News; and Calendar.

### Are you missing an issue of *JVIB*?

Confused about how to find all 9 years of *JVIB* Online?

Simply go to the following URL to find all online issues of *JVIB* in one place!

[http://www.afb.org/jvib/jvib\\_main.asp](http://www.afb.org/jvib/jvib_main.asp)

Readers are encouraged to share their thoughts on this issue of *JVIB* by sending an e-mail message to [jvibeditor@afb.net](mailto:jvibeditor@afb.net) or to voice their opinions on the *JVIB* message boards at the following web address: [http://www.afb.org/jvib\\_message\\_board.asp](http://www.afb.org/jvib_message_board.asp)

## Calling all Braille Writers

The Onkyo Corporation, The Braille Mainichi Newspaper and the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific (WBUAP) have much pleasure in announcing the start of the Seventh WBUAP Onkyo Braille Essay Contest for people who are blind or vision impaired in the Asia Pacific Region. The contest aims, among other things, to promote Braille literacy and to encourage the reading and writing habit among people who are blind or vision impaired in the Region.

### Who can participate?

Participation is open to all people who are blind or vision impaired from two age groups: (1) between 14 and 25 years and (2) 26 years and above.

### What can you write about?

Your essay must address one of the following three topics:

1. How has Braille changed the lives of the people who are blind or vision impaired, in particular my daily life?
2. In what ways have Braille and audio devices enriched my daily life?
3. How can Braille help a person who is blind or vision impaired to become a successful musician?

The length of your essay must be between 750 and 1000 words when it is converted into print before being lodged with the WBUAP. Essays that are too short or too lengthy will not be considered. A maximum of the five best entries from Australia can be lodged with the WBUAP.

### Who are the Judges?

There are four Australian Judges for the Australian entries: Frances Gentle, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children; Josie Howse, NSW Department of Education and Training; Stefan Slucki, Royal Society for the Blind of South Australia and Gillian Gale

### How will the essays be judged?

In determining the best five entries, the Judges will consider three things:

1. the story line closest to one of the three topics chosen;
2. the impact and credibility of the person's experiences; and
3. the accuracy and neatness in the person's use of Braille (a secondary consideration).

### What will the winners receive?

The names of winners will be announced by early November 2009 after the contest sponsors are satisfied with the results. WBUAP will then forward the prizes to the national judging committee for presentation to the winners. Cash prizes range from USD1000 and a trophy for the overall Otsuki Prize, to USD500 and a trophy for Excellent Works, and USD200 for Fine Works.

### What is the deadline for lodging essays?

Your essay must be lodged by the deadline of 10 May 2009. Late entries will not be considered.

### How do I lodge my essay?

Your essay must be accompanied by the following details:

Full name – as shown on birth certificate, passport or legal documents;

Age – attach confirmation from someone in authority, eg from your school, college, organisation;

Proof of gender – send an electronic photo

Occupation – student, homemaker etc

Name, address and email of the national organisation you belong to (eg BCA, BWA of SA) or the school/college you attend. Also include phone, fax and email details.

Email your essay with the above information to [scarter@rsb.org.au](mailto:scarter@rsb.org.au), or post your Brailled essay with the above information to Sharyn Carter, Executive Assistant, Royal Society for the Blind, 254 Angas Street, Adelaide SA 5000.

For further information contact Margaret Verick, Children's Committee Coordinator & ABF Project Officer, National Disability Services (NDS) Ph: (02) 6283 3214 Fax: (02) 6281 3488

Email: [margaret.verick@nds.org.au](mailto:margaret.verick@nds.org.au) <<mailto:margaret.verick@nds.org.au>>

## **SPEVI Membership**

2007-2009 SPEVI membership expires on the 31st March 2009. A membership form is attached. Please renew by that date if you have not updated your membership. Accessible Membership forms can be found at the following web site <http://www.e-bility.com/spevi/>  
 Reminder: The SPEVI Conference will be in Sydney in 2011. Please keep these dates free, Monday 17th January - Friday 21st January, 2011.

## **Victorian Youth Disability Sports Development Camp**

Wheelchair Sports Victoria in conjunction with the Australian Paralympic Committee is hosting the Victorian Youth Disability Sports Development Camp from Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The camp is open to participants with physical or sensory disability, including vision impairment, from across the State aged between 12 and 20 years of age. The camp will be held in Melbourne and utilise some of the best quality and most accessible public sporting venues and facilities, including the Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre. Participants will try up to three different sports and activities, in addition to the scheduled education and social activities. For more information contact Wheelchair Sports Victoria on (03) 9473 0133.

## **Non Verbal Communication - Body Expression**

Geoff Bowen has found an excellent resource about how to help students who are blind learn body language, or body expression, as some like to call it. The paper is written by a blind professional who uses nonverbal language in his work counselling clients. He has developed such skill in this area that he now runs workshops for students and professionals in how to teach non verbal communication to blind students, he writes:

“My point here is that I believe that communication with the body is a natural process, though the culture shapes the specifics of how we do it.

If blind kids have been inhibited in developing their natural movement style (and haven't we all seen many who have), then it will not be so natural for them to try to communicate with their bodies. Although I don't think you all can take on the task of making blind kids in general as physically and nonverbally communicative as are sighted kids, I know that you can make an impact.

Why not discuss how people communicate nonverbally and if you have time, have kids practice doing some nonverbal game playing with either teachers or other sighted kids reading their nonverbals back to them. Think of the people whom you know who are totally blind and who have never had enough eye sight to observe nonverbals, and yet who have a strong nonverbal presence and who use their bodies, their faces, and their hands well. And think of what would help the less nonverbally communicative child look a bit more like them ...

My friend Jay Stitely and I travel all over the place presenting workshops about body language that we call "body expression" ... we concentrate on basic skills like handshakes, eye contact (looking in the direction of the person who's speaking), using body space, and posture ... We also deal in a more limited way with gestures, movement, and facial expression ... mostly, we ask the participants what they want to work on and roll with it ... Over the course of several years doing this, we've taught people how to wave, shrug, slouch, sit comfortably, and pretty much anything they wanted to try. ”

Excerpt from: *Teaching a blind child how to "read" body language.*

A copy of the article which contains some practical ideas for teaching body language, is available from SVRC. Just phone for a copy on (03) 9841 0242 or go to <http://www.viguide.com/vsnsocial.htm>

## **New Autism website to help parents and carers**

Parents and carers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) will benefit from a new information website created as part of the \$190 million *Helping Children with Autism* package.

The website was launched today at Parliament House by the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services Bill Shorten.

It provides information, online resources and interactive functions to support parents, carers and professionals.

This includes impartial, evidence-based information about Autism Spectrum Disorders and early intervention treatments available to children with ASDs.

“Raising a child with autism can be a huge challenge for families,” Ms Macklin said.

“This website provides valuable information about the resources that are available to help these families.

“It is especially vital for families in rural and remote areas who might otherwise have difficulty accessing information.”

The website is the culmination of eight months of development and research by the Raising Children Network, a consortium of three organisations with a proven track record in child development, research and information delivery.

The website will continue to be developed this year and will incorporate feedback from families and autism organisations.

Future enhancements will include video clips, improvements to interactive features, additional text based articles, and further parent guides to therapies which will be available in September 2009.

Mr Shorten said that the Australian Government was committed to providing improved support for children with ASDs and their families and carers.

“We recognise the difficulties that families with a child with autism are facing and are providing early intervention and support for them.”

“Professional services for these families can make a huge difference to their lives.”

The *Helping Children with Autism* package includes several other initiatives:

- Autism Advisors in every state and territory;
- Dedicated playgroups for children with an ASD or ASD like symptoms;
- Workshops for families or carers of children with ASD;
- Changes to Medicare items which will assist access to early intervention treatment; and
- Workshops for teachers through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The ASD website can be found at <http://raisingchildren.net.au/autism>

## National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy 2009

The national tests in literacy and numeracy will be conducted in May 2009.

The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests will involve students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 from all States and Territories. In Victoria approximately 260,000 students from all Government, Catholic and Independent schools will participate in the program.

### Timetable

Year Level	Tuesday 12 May	Wednesday 13 May	Thursday 14 May
Year 3	<b>Language Conventions*</b> 40 minutes  <b>Writing</b> 40 minutes	<b>Reading</b> 45 minutes	<b>Numeracy</b> 45 minutes  Year 3 students undertake one numeracy test. Calculators are not permitted to be used in this test.
Year 5	<b>Language Conventions</b> 40 minutes  <b>Writing</b> 40 minutes	<b>Reading</b> 50 minutes	<b>Numeracy</b> 50 minutes  Year 5 students undertake one numeracy test. Calculators are not permitted to be used in this test.
Year 7	<b>Language Conventions</b> 45 minutes  <b>Writing</b> 40 minutes	<b>Reading</b> 65 minutes	<b>Numeracy</b> 40 minutes x 2 (80 minutes total)  Year 7 students undertake two numeracy tests. Calculators are permitted to be used in one of these tests only.
Year 9	<b>Language Conventions</b> 45 minutes  <b>Writing</b> 40 minutes	<b>Reading</b> 65 minutes	<b>Numeracy</b> 40 minutes x 2 (80 minutes total)  Year 9 students undertake two numeracy tests. Calculators are permitted to be used in one of these tests only.

### What if a child has special needs?

All students will be encouraged to take part in the NAPLAN tests. Special provisions are available to meet the needs of individual students, such as alternative versions of the tests in Large Print or Braille. For further information contact the VCAA NAPLAN Help Desk on freecall 1800 648 637 or email [vcaa.naplan.help@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcaa.naplan.help@edumail.vic.gov.au).

An application form for requesting special provision can be found in Principal's Guide and should be faxed to VCAA on 9225 2334.

Source: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/naplan/geninfo.html>

## Way of the Cross:

### ***Touch Access Walks in the Melbourne CBD***

Be part of a Lenten walk for people who are blind or have low vision, following the Stations of the Cross as portrayed by artist Anna Meszaros in a series of bronze relief sculptures around the Melbourne CBD.

The walks start from St Francis Church in Lonsdale Street at 2pm on Saturday 21st and Saturday 28th March 2009 and conclude at St Paul's Cathedral around 4pm.

Places are limited so bookings are essential, stating which date and your preferred format for text. Bring walking shoes as there is a lot of walking, a hat, sunscreen and a drink bottle, or raincoat.

People who are blind or have low vision are encouraged to be accompanied by a sighted companion. (Sighted people must be accompanied by a person who is blind or has low vision). Audio description will be provided for the artworks to compliment the opportunity of touch access. This special opportunity is being supported by Vision Australia and the Melbourne City Churches in Action group.

All enquiries and bookings to Michael Donnelly, Art Teacher, Vision Australia School. Phone: (03) 9808 6422 or email: [michael.donnelly@visionaustralia.org](mailto:michael.donnelly@visionaustralia.org)

## Braille Calendar

From Deb Lewis:

Would your braille students like a braille calendar? Braille calendars are now available from the SVRC. Please put in your order to the Braille Department!

## Staff & Student News

- Alana is working towards an Arts Degree by enrolling in English Literature and Law and Society at LaTrobe University this semester.
- We have recently received a postcard from braille staff member, Jenny McKenzie who is travelling in Egypt. She has been sailing down the Nile, exploring the Valley of the Kings and taking in the local traffic which operates without traffic lights or rules as far as Jenny can work out! We look forward to hearing about her adventures when she returns to work this week.
- More comings and goings at the SVRC. Welcome to Breanna and Susan who are helping out with e-text. We also welcome Lynda who was with us for a short time last year and is back again to assist in the braille department with tactual graphics.
- Don't forget our bushfire appeal for children's books.

## Finally

Thanks to Deb Lewis, Marion Blazé, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Geoff Bowen, Phillip McKenna, 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)).

# Skill Power 2009



*Workshops for students with vision impairments  
and their visiting teachers, teachers, aides, parents etc*

Wednesday 29 April 2009

**Where:** Statewide Vision Resource Centre, 370 Springvale Rd Donvale

**Parking:** Next door at the Donvale Sports Complex

Please park in the lower car park

The workshops are arranged into three sessions  
- come to one or come to all - RSVP essential!

<b>Workshop Timetable</b>	
10.00 - 11.30	<b>Mountbatten</b> Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology * BYO Mountbatten
11.45 - 1.15	<b>BrailleNote</b> Ramona Mandy, HumanWare * Please arrive early so the demo software can be loaded to your computer * BYO Computer
1.30 - 3.00	<b>Computer without the Mouse</b> Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher * BYO Computer

Cost: FREE

Tea and coffee will be available but lunch will not be provided - please BYO.  
**BYO laptop (free demo software will be available for download).**

For the SVRC Professional Development Program visit:

<http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd.html>

Enquiries and RSVP to [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au) / 9841 0242.