

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

**Number 19**
**Monday 22nd November 2010**

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

### Professional Development Activities for Term 1, 2011

Professional Development Event 2010	Date
<b>Pupil-free days - Professional learning activities by request</b> Please <a href="#">contact us</a> to request an activity	Tues 1, Wed 2, Thurs 3 Feb
<b>Educational support for blind students</b> This day is designed for class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, therapists, parents/care-givers and visiting teachers who support students who utilize braille	Monday 14 February
<b>Educational support for students with low vision - Prep to year 5</b> 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: 60)	Tuesday 1 March
<b>New visiting teacher - Orientation day - 9.30am to 3.00pm</b>	Mon 7 March
<b>Visiting teacher professional learning day - Term 1</b>	Tues 8 March
<b>Educational support for students with low vision - Year 6 to year 12</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)	Tuesday 22 March
<b>Dot power</b> Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tues 29 March

The yearly program is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PLPannual.shtml>

### “What If” Writing Competition – and the winner is...

**Overall winner: Claudia, Year 2, with her fantastic story about a possum.**

Winner Upper Primary Story: Daniel Year 6, A very creative and entertaining story – Etext

Winner Upper Primary Poetry: William, Year 5, If I Could Chang the World – Etext/Large Print

Winner Lower Secondary Story: Alexandra, Year 7, Story of Teenage Rebellion – BrailleNote

Winner Lower Secondary Poem: Harrison, Year 7, Hopes for a happy world – Large Print format

Winner Upper Secondary Poem: Georgia, Year 9, What If I Could Fly? – Print

Commendations: Thanhtuoc Autran Year 2, When Esma Ruled the World – Braille format; Emily,

Year 3, Kitten’s Problems – Braille; Mohamed, Year 4, Dramatic Story with a happy ending –

BrailleNote; Bonnie, Year 5, What If You Won a Million Dollars – Large Print

All participants received a block of chocolate with the winners also receiving a gift voucher from

Borders Doncaster!

### Inside This Issue

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## **Expo of Access Technology for People with Vision Impairments Report by Marion**

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November, was a hectic day at SVRC with 20+ presenters and 100+ people through the doors to look, try and explore the different equipment. We saw the new Perkins Braille (yes, after all these years, it has a new design!), the Sony eBook reader, the new Zooming magnifier from Eschenbach, demonstrations of blind cricket and all the technology which does braille, talks, enlarges and more! Many thanks to representatives from Australian Independence Products, Blind Sports, Borders, European Eyewear, Guide Dogs Victoria, Humanware, Pacific Vision, Quantum Technology, Vision Australia and the SVRC Support Skills crew. Thank you also to the ever-busy-but-willing SVRC team who rearranged the furniture and arranged the refreshments (yet again!) to accommodate this very busy but successful day.

## **Two Plus Four Equals One**

### **Celebrating the Partnership of People with Disabilities and Their Assistance Dogs!**

Teacher and writer Kathy Nimmer has written and edited this inspiring anthology of true stories and poems from around the world!

#### **ABOUT THE BOOK**

True, vibrant, honest, and emotional, eliciting compassion, joy, sorrow, and love, promoting understanding, acceptance, awareness, and hope. Two Plus Four Equals One offers over 100 stories and poems written by or about men, women, and children, all either with disabilities or connected to people who have disabilities. Joining them are Labradors, German Shepherds, Poodles, Papillons, Goldens, Shelties, Chihuahuas, and many other breeds, all trained to assist their disabled handlers.

From blindness to deafness, from mobility issues to psychiatric needs, from diabetes to autism, the array of disabilities showcased in this unforgettable book is as vast as the tasks performed by the canine partners. This book highlights the strength, competence, and potential of both the human and canine participants in an alliance where neither partner is perfect but both together add up to an equation where two hands/feet/eyes/ears plus four paws equals one magical union.

#### **PURPOSE AND REACH**

Attention to assistance dogs is growing in today's society. However, people are largely unaware of how these dogs work and what tasks they perform. This book offers an educational inroad through the power of personal narrative.

There is also a great need for inspiration and hope these days, something to warm the heart and lift the spirit. Love for dogs is fundamental in our society. These writings of triumph, teamwork, humour, success, and love will warm hearts and encourage hope in readers.

#### **ABOUT THE WRITER/EDITOR**

Kathy Nimmer is an award-winning teacher, author, and motivational speaker from West Lafayette, Indiana. In 2006, she won first place in the Helen Keller International Memoir Competition and published a book of poetry called *Minutes in the Dark, Eternity in the Light*. She received the Butler-Cooley Excellence in Teaching Award in 2004, is a two-time recipient of the Lilly Teacher Creativity Fellowship, earned National Board Certification in 2003, and was presented with the Golden Apple in 1998. In 2009, she was named a Lilly Distinguished Fellow, giving her the opportunity to pursue a lifelong dream, the fulfilment of which is *Two Plus Four Equals One*. Blind due to a rare retinal disease, Nimmer teaches sophomore English and creative writing at Harrison High School in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Learn more and order your copy at <http://www.servicedogstories.com>

Thanks to Garry Stinchcombe for forwarding this information.

## Getting Started

Great news!!! The second part in the Getting Started Series is now available - 'GETTING STARTED!!! Using Visual Systems to Promote Play' by Dolly Bhargava. This practical resource booklet has been written for parents and discusses a range of visual systems and strategies that can be used at home to develop your child's play skills. Accompanying the booklet is a DVD which demonstrates the use of the discussed strategies with children with disabilities. This resource is both informative and user-friendly and its organisation allows you to 'dip' in and out of sections according to your needs.

The resource is free but to cover the cost of postage and handling for requests of more than 1 copy please send a cheque \$5 - 5 copies; \$10 - 10 copies; \$20-20 copies made out to "Carson Street School" and mail to 19 Carson Street, East Victoria Park, Western Australia 6101.

For more information please contact Dolly Bhargava, Disability Specialist Speech Pathologist, Innovative Communication Programming [www.innovativeprogramming.net.au](http://www.innovativeprogramming.net.au)

## One for the Visiting Teachers: Eye Charts

Snellen's eye chart was originally calibrated in Parisian feet and then converted to the metric system in 1875. We often come across visual acuities in reports written as 6/60, 6/48, 6/24 etc., however there are other scales used and it is quite an exercise to work out the equivalents. Despair not; there is a table which gives equivalents in a publication called Visual Standards – Aspects and Ranges of Vision Loss. Follow the following link and go to page 15 for the table:

<http://www.icoph.org/downloads/visualstandardsreport.pdf>

Thanks to Sharon Saunders for sending in this information.

## Active Girls Camp

Girl Guides Victoria is delivering exciting opportunities for girls aged 9 – 13 during the school holidays. The next program is an *Active Girls Camp* in 2011 January summer school holidays! The program incorporates tailored adventure activities and life-skills:

- Surfing
- Circus Skills
- Dance workshop
- Canoeing
- Mind and Body Balance Workshop

**When:** Sunday 16 January – Saturday 22 January, 2011

**Where:** ILUKA Girl Guide Campsite, Shoreham Road, Shoreham.

**Enquiries:** Further Information and Application: [www.guidesvic.ogr.au](http://www.guidesvic.ogr.au)

**Email:** Liz Paolacci at [camps@guidesvic.org.au](mailto:camps@guidesvic.org.au)

Book Now Limited Places!

## End of year returns

The end of the year is fast approaching and we would really like to get as many resources back to the SVRC as possible. Many of our resources are hand made and take many hours to produce, with that in mind here is a message from Taryn:

Could Visiting Teachers and schools please return all Tactile Books borrowed from the Tactile Department before the end of the year.

Thanks, Taryn.

## Staff and Student News

### ***Variety Club Bike Presentation***

I thought you would like to read this email from Marg Moloney, Visiting Teacher – Hume Region, about a couple of students who have received bikes from the Variety Club of Victoria.

Today I went down to Craigieburn with a family from Kinglake, Rachel, Mark and the two brothers, Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke did not know that I had put their names in for receiving a new bike and helmet from the Variety Club. They wondered what was going on, but started to piece clues together as they got closer to the Sporting Club. There were dozens of bikes and the children were taken to their brand new bike and helmet either by the donor, giving it to them personally, or by a Variety Club member. The bikes were either bright blue or purple, which they thought was "a bit girlie!" so both ended up with a sparkling blue bike. I asked how they would know which bike belonged to which. Rachel assured me that within a week, one would be far more scratched and worn. I didn't ask who would be the reckless one!

Tawny (Marg's therapy dog) came along. The boys wanted her in the photo too. Rachel and the boys are now working out "Thank you" letters to send to the Variety Club. These bikes will be much appreciated. I just hope I don't see the two boys come hurtling down the Ranges from Kinglake on their new, blue bikes!



Postscript from Marg: I went back down to Middle Kinglake yesterday, as I do each week and the boys told me that they had ridden their new bikes "heaps", racing each other down the track round and back to the house. Plenty of thrills and spills. I said that I hoped there were more thrills than spills. They assured me that there were, however, I suspect that the spills contributed to the thrills, knowing them!

### ***Another Happy Recipient***

Joy's student, Heath, was another happy recipient of the Variety Club Bike program. The photo below shows Heath receiving his bike from a Variety Club donor. The photo taken at Craigieburn on 17th November 2010.



Photo sent in by Joy, Visiting Teacher – Northern Region.

### ***Student wins Caltex All Rounder Award***

Johanna, who attends Balwyn High School, has been awarded the 2010 Year 11 Caltex All Rounder award. Her mum writes, "Who said that vision impaired kids can't do everything!!!!". Congratulations Johanna!

### ***Junior Swish Club***

Many of the students attending Support Skills this year have enjoyed playing swish at the SVRC recently. Many of them belong to a Junior Swish Club which meets on Saturday afternoons at Vision Australia in Kooyong. Here is some information provided by one of the support skills student's, Lizzie, about the Junior Swish Club:

Swish is a fast paced sport similar to both table tennis and air hockey which can be enjoyed by both blind and sighted players without any real advantage. Swish Victoria run a program for junior players aged 6 to 21 at Vision Australia, Kooyong. Currently they are seeking new blind and sighted participants to join in the fun on Saturdays between 12.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Junior player Kim Black says "When I first started playing I could barely hit the ball from one end of the table to the other; just a couple of months ago my senior partner and I came second in the Victorian Swish Tournament!"

Coach Kristy Hyland believes "The beauty of Swish is that you don't have to be brilliant at sport. Culturally the group is very patient with new players but there is also the opportunity to play in both local and interstate competitions for those that want that bit more."

For more details on how to get involved in the junior swish program please contact Michael Fogarty on 0409 182 035 or email [dhemfogarty@bigpond.com](mailto:dhemfogarty@bigpond.com)  
It is important that new participants contact Michael prior to turning up to confirm program details.



Pictured above, swish players, Lizzie, Sam and Kristy, with their trophies.  
Thanks to Lizzie for this information.

## Bowling for low vision & blind students

Southern Region end of year activity – all welcome! We have asked Alan Bates and friends who featured in the Frankston Leader to teach us how he has so much fun.

**Where:** Mentone Bowl, Cnr. Nepean Hwy and Warrigal Rd.

**When:** Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Start 9.30 am Finish 2.30 pm approx

**Cost:** Please bring \$10 per child and \$10 per adult if you want to bowl, includes shoes + extra MET fare if applicable. Mentone is in Zone 2

**More Information:** Jennifer Blake, Teacher in Charge - Visiting Teacher: Mobile 0428 134 660

## Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Deb Lewis, Marg Moloney, Marion Blazé and Garry Stinchcombe.

If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please forward it to Lyn Robinson [lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au)

To Read the Bulletin Online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>