

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 18

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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

### PD and Other Activities for Term 4, 2011

<b>Educational Expo – Access technology options</b> This day is suitable for teachers, aides, therapists, parents/carers, visiting teachers, STUDENTS and members of the wider community - all welcome!	Friday 25 November
<b>Inaugural SVRC Tactual Graphics Conference</b> This conference will offer a range of workshops for Visiting Teachers, parents, early childhood educators and others conducted by Polish educator, Professor Bob Marek. See issue 17 for more information.	A series of workshops during the week of 28 November
<b>Dot Power</b> Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 2	Tuesday 29 November
<b>SVRC Christmas morning tea</b> All welcome! – please RSVP	Wednesday 7 December

The program for 2011-2 is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

### PD for 2012 Now on the Net

The Professional Development page on the SVRC website has now been updated to include planned PD and other activities for 2012. You can download the program with a map and transport information from the links on the page!

Visit: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

### Postgraduate Studies in Vision in 2012

The Renwick Centre conducts excellent courses in vision impairment including Graduate Certificate in Education Studies and Master of Special Education. A number of Visiting Teachers are currently undertaking studies through Renwick and have found the course both valuable and interesting. The Master of Special Education and the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies may be completed through Distance Education.

If you'd like more information, visit: <http://www.ridbc.org.au/renwick/courses/postgraduate.php>, email: [mailcpe@ridbc.org.au](mailto:mailcpe@ridbc.org.au) or phone / TTY: (02) 9872 0302.

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## Masterclass with Cay Holbrook

On Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November the first Masterclass with Cay Holbrook was held at the SVRC. Cay spoke to the group about teaching reading to students with vision impairments. Cay said literacy must be our goal and that as qualified experienced teachers of the vision impaired we must teach literacy. Cay talked about the importance of students having a range of tools in their “literacy toolbox”. When determining which tools are needed Cay spoke about how to use the Learning Media Assessment to help inform the decision making process. We are keen to get your feedback so if you haven’t already sent in your feedback, could you please do so: [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au). A more extensive report will be available in the next issue of The Bulletin.

## Will You Be at Space Camp in 2012???

For information about Space Camp from SVRC, see the links on this page: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/EPspacecamp.shtml>

For information about Space Camp from Texas School for the Blind, see <http://www.tsbvi.edu/space/>

For another article from Space Camp 2011, see:

[http://blog.al.com/breaking/2011/09/visually\\_impaired\\_students\\_fly.html](http://blog.al.com/breaking/2011/09/visually_impaired_students_fly.html)



It is possible that there will be a Victorian presence at Space Camp 2012!!! We have three students who have expressed some interest in travelling with an SVRC group – the minimum number is 4 (with 2 chaperones), maximum is 6-7. To travel with this group, students must be enrolled in government schools. Meanwhile, there is interest from another group in New South Wales!!! If Space Camp interests you or you have questions that you’d like to ask, please email [deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au) or phone (03) 9841 0242.

## Low Vision Students: Memory Game on the Net

Play a 6x6 matching memory game on the internet. This mouse-based game has 18 pairs of squares which flash and rotate on a black background. At the end of the game, you can read the percentage of correct answers – so you can challenge yourself in the next game. Quite fun!!!

Visit: <http://www.zefrank.com/memory/index.html>

## White Cane Day – Flash Mob

On October 15, 2011, the Seattle community came together to celebrate independence of people who are blind, Deaf-Blind, and blind with other disabilities by performing a flash mob dance performance in McGraw Square in downtown Seattle, WA. The performance was in honour of National White Cane Safety Day, a national holiday that recognizes the importance of the white cane as a symbol of independence for people who are blind. The following video was uploaded by Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind <http://www.youtube.com/user/SeattleLighthouse>

## Gymnastics for Students with Vision Impairments

Essendon Keilor Gymnastics is offering a gymnastics and trampoline 10-week pilot program with support from Blind Sports Victoria. The classes are suitable for absolute beginners, with no prior experience or exposure to gymnastics. Some of the greatest benefits of gymnastics include coordination, power, strength, flexibility, balance, grace and most importantly injury preventing core stability and agility. Gymnastics teaches children perseverance, poise, confidence, attention to detail and concentration.

**Where:** 194 Roberts Road, Airport West 3042 (Melways ref: 15 F8)

**When:** Fridays at 4.30pm and on Saturdays at 12pm commencing 10 February 10 2012

**Cost:** Free

**To register or for more information:** Phone 9336 4077 or email [ekga@gymnastics.org.au](mailto:ekga@gymnastics.org.au)

## Round Table News

From Gregory Kearney – Association for the Blind of Western Australia

Association for the Blind of Western Australia is introducing the idea of a Commonwealth Braille & Talking Book Cooperative <http://www.guidedogswa.org/cbtbc/>

This project is open to open to any library, agency, school or other entity serving the blind, vision impaired or print disabled (dyslexia, etc.) operating within the Commonwealth or organisations from nations or states with an historic, cultural or linguistic tie to Commonwealth such as the United States, Ireland, Zimbabwe, The Philippines etc. Membership is at no cost.

This project in no way should be viewed as a replacement for the work on a wider talking book treaty or the work of the WIPO which we fully support. We seek here to achieve two goals:

1. Greater cooperation between talking book libraries in the Commonwealth.
2. Support for talking book libraries and users in developing nations within the Commonwealth.

Please feel free to Greg with any questions or comments you might have at:

Tel: 08 9311 8246 | Fax: 08 9361 8696 | [www.guidedogswa.com.au](http://www.guidedogswa.com.au)

Tel: 307-224-4022 (North America)

Email: [greg.kearney@guidedogswa.com.au](mailto:greg.kearney@guidedogswa.com.au)

## BrailleNote Apex Q&A

Source: Ramona Mandy, September to October 2011 edition of Australian BrailleNote Update

**Q:** How long can I use my BrailleNote Apex on battery power?

**A:** The Apex's battery life can vary based on usage activity. Typically if not using wireless, bluetooth, or internet connectivity, you should be able to use your Apex for a standard 8 hour work day. Please keep in mind that having wireless or bluetooth turned on, or leaving external drives connected will decrease your battery life.

**Q:** How often should I charge the battery of my BrailleNote Apex?

**A:** It is best to charge the Apex nightly similar to the charging cycle for a mobile phone. It is not possible to over-charge the battery and it will always be ready for maximum use the following day.

Remember that even when the Apex's power switch is turned off it is still drawing power from the battery in stand-by mode. The advantage of this mode is that when the switch is turned on, the Apex will resume usage almost instantly, and directly where it was left off before the power switch was turned off, rather than needing to boot at start up, similar to a computer.

**Q:** How should I store my BrailleNote Apex for an extended period of time?

**A:** If you plan on leaving the Apex unused for several days it is best to put your Apex into deep sleep mode. This essentially completely turns off the unit so very little power is drained from the battery. To turn on deep sleep mode do the following:

From the main menu press U for utilities. Press M for miscellaneous options. Press space twice and press Y to answer yes to enter deep sleep mode. Turn off the power switch.

The next time you turn on the Apex you will notice that it will reset and take a bit longer to boot, however the power level will be very close to where it was when you put the unit in deep sleep mode.

## Tackling Global Blindness Mini Doco

Vision 2020 has uploaded a great little “mini doco” to Youtube describing the Australian Government through the Avoidable Blindness Initiative and Vision 2020 Australia’s Global Consortium’s assistance in the Asia Pacific region. Globally 285 million people are blind or vision impaired. View the mini doco:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyVgBOo9O3o&feature=youtu.be>

## Texas School for the Blind Website

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has recently revamped their website and included a great new page that will assist us all to trawl through and locate valuable resources and information regarding the Expanded Core Curriculum. You can search using topics including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Career Education and Transition</li> <li>• Compensatory/Access</li> <li>• Deafblind</li> <li>• Early Childhood</li> <li>• Family Resources</li> <li>• Independent Living</li> <li>• Maths</li> <li>• MIVI</li> <li>• O&amp;M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Education</li> <li>• Professional Resources</li> <li>• Recreation and Leisure</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Self Determination</li> <li>• sensory Efficiency</li> <li>• Social Interaction</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Vision and Vision Impairment</li> </ul>
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And you can choose a media type:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article</li> <li>• Book</li> <li>• Kit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VHS/DVD</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Word/Pdf file</li> </ul>
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Visit: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/REC2Web/>

## Early Mathematics Literacy for Pre-Schoolers

Thanks to Beth Glover, Vision Australia, for this great resource!

This resource was developed as part of a Students with Vision Loss Initiative project by Janis Morrison (REACH), Susan Guilault (ERECS) and Bev Kula (U of A). The manual, broken into seven parts, is available to anyone for download.

Inside are great ideas with lots of colourful pictures to assist in the teaching of maths to younger students – take a look: <http://vision.alberta.ca/resources/adaptingprograms/math.aspx>

## Wee See – Vision Stimulation

Wee See is a collection of black-and-white animations built from basic shapes which has been designed to stimulate early vision. The simple animations move slowly yet remain interesting and inventive with an original score by Tim DeLaughter. These DVDs, designed for babies, may also be useful for students who profoundly and multiply impaired.

There are two DVDs which are available separately. Visit: <http://weeseeworld.com/site/>

## Windows Short-Cut Keys

Thanks to Quantum’s Trevor Boyd for this great list of links to useful resources:

<http://www.visuallyimpairedandtheblind.com/keyboardshortcuts.html>

## From Our Junior Reporters

### ***Report: Blind Cricket By Thientuoc***

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, Thanh, Emily, Penny, Gayle, Mohamed and I went to the blind cricket come and try day and it was at Vision Australia Kooyong. The reason we went there was because we wanted to try out blind cricket to see if we liked it. We did some bowling with the bell ball, and we also did some fielding and some batting, and at the end we played a game of blind cricket. And this is how to play: blind cricket is just like normal cricket but with a bell ball and another person can run for you if you don't want to or if you are blind. You bat the ball and the fielding person will try to catch it when you're running and if they catch you out, you're out. When I caught somebody out, I felt really excited. And when I bowled the ball and the batsman missed, it was fun to watch the batsman bat again. Something new that I learned was that blind cricket is just the same as normal cricket except that there is a bell ball and someone can run for you if you can't see and don't want to.

### ***Report: International White Cane Day by Thanh***

On Friday, Emily and Thien and I went to International White Cane Day. It was on October the 14<sup>th</sup>. There were also other vision impaired people. But there were also a few sighted adults. It is called International White Cane Day because it is to celebrate white canes and it is celebrated around the world. White canes are celebrated because they make blind people independent and free. It was at the tram depot. It was located in Southbank. We also went to Flinders Street train station. We had lunch at Southbank food court. We had treats at Southern Cross station in a cafe. We got to touch a tram and a train. We got to go where the driver sits and explore what they use. I also got to ring the bell, honk the horn and open and close some of the doors. We went to International White Cane Day to know what some types of public transport feel like. We also got to learn how to go on a tram and a train.

The tram that was a W-class felt hard because it was made out of wood. On the train were 3 carriages that had a chain and some metal in between the carriages.

It felt fantastic because I got to meet new people and guide dogs. It also felt interesting because I had never been on a tram before. My favourite thing was when I stepped on the bell that you have to step on in order to ring it on the W-class tram.

### ***Report: iSeek Day by Thientuoc***

On Wednesday 21 of September Thanh and I went to iSeek day and there were lots of activities like PE and Swish and there was a reptile incursion. There was also a touch table and there were lots of objects on it like a giant glove and some cardboard. Also there were some people who I met and their names were Konna, Jai, Ryan, Mohamed, Georgia, Marisa, Amina, Tuong, and there was some other people that came who I can't remember. All of the kids that came to iSeek Day were blind or vision impaired. iSeek Day was for kids who are blind or have a vision impairment to get together and learn about Braille and sport and other things for people who have a vision impairment or people who can't see at all. It was in a suburb called Altona and in a place called the Sadie McCarthy Learning Centre. We got there by train and we walked out of the train station until we found the Sadie McCarthy Learning Centre.

First were the parachute games, then there were the get-to-know-you activities and after that there was the reptile incursion. Then we split up into 2 groups and there was a junior group and a senior group. One of the groups went to PE, and the other one went to O&M. Then the senior group went to play Swish and that was mostly the whole day. I think my favourite parts of the day were Swish and the reptile incursion because I won in Swish and the reptile incursion was really fun.

## ***iSeek Day by Thanh***

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, me, Thien and Emily went to iSeek day. It was in Altona. There were also lots of vision impaired kids and a few adults. We got there by 2 trains. We played Swish. Swish is a game where you have to get into pairs. Then you try and block the other pair from making the ball go off the table on your side. You will need a ball and some small bats. The ball needs to be a bell ball. You will also need a Swish table. A Swish table is like a table tennis table except it has tactile squares for serving in, rails on the sides to keep the ball from falling off, and a board in the middle for the ball to roll under. The board is also for sighted people so they can't see what the other person is doing across from them. This is why sighted people are allowed to play with vision impaired people fairly, because having vision doesn't give them an advantage.

We also did PE, where we had to use stepping stones. We had to see how many times we could hop on them, and jump over them. Then we did some juggling and throwing and catching with scarves. We also rolled balls and tried to get them through people's legs.

We also touched some reptiles. I touched a crocodile, a snake, two different kinds of lizards and a frog (which is not a reptile). I also touched a turtle. They had sharp claws. The crocodile felt bumpy. We also played basketball. We went inside the parachute and everybody else had to shake the parachute. We shook the parachute, put balls inside of it and kicked it with our legs. We also met other kids and another Emily. We did a roll call to know everybody's name so that people with a vision impairment could recognise their voices.

We went to iSeek Day which was for kids who are vision impaired to learn more things about others who are blind or have low vision. We also got to touch and look at a touch table where you get to touch things like a chain, taxidermied animals, some sea shells, rocks and pieces of glass which weren't sharp.

It was interesting because I found out information about reptiles and other things like how to play Swish and what stepping stones are like. I also got to learn other people's names and voices who had a vision impairment. I was excited to play Swish and learn what stepping stones are and what some cooking implements were, like microwaves, knives, tea pots, a kettle, a stove, a frying pan and some scissors. It felt fun to play with some other vision impaired students and meet them.

## **Tuong's Story**



Tuong came to Australia in 2009 from Vietnam after an Australian Aid worker, Kim Thien Truong found him in Saigon. His mother dead and his father's whereabouts unknown, Tuong was living with his elderly grandmother who was struggling to manage his undiagnosed glaucoma. Kim together with Kim's Foundation of Hope Inc. raised the funds to send Tuong to Australia under a medical visa.

Tuong has been a member of Dot Power for the past two years and his infectious laughter has enhanced Dot Power for students and staff alike!

Tuong will be returning to Vietnam and those who have been part of his journey here in Melbourne will miss him greatly.

If you'd like more information about Kim's Foundation of Hope Inc, please visit the website:  
<http://kimsfoundationofhopeinc.jimdo.com/>

## SVRC Website: Parent Page

One of the recommendations arising from the quality assurance framework conducted with Mark Tainsh was to establish a page specifically for parents on the SVRC website. So it is there – now what else do you all think should be on it???

At present, the following links are available:

- **Dot Power** - program for beginning braille readers (pre-school to grade 3). Hear the Dot Power songs - we use these songs to support the teaching of contracted braille for beginning braille readers.
- **Space Camp** - Huntsville, Alabama
- **Special Activities** - generally relating to literacy, technology, recreation, sport etc and offering students and families an opportunity to meet each other
- **Support Skills Program** - program for Victorian students with vision impairments from year 4 to year 19.

### **More information about vision**

- **About Vision** - information about vision and vision impairments
- **Albinism Conference PowerPoint** and **Albinism Conference References** - resources provided by SVRC psychologist Geoff Bowen, September 2011
- **Playing vision detective!** - Questions to ask your vision specialist (Word document)
- **Support networks** - Where to go for information

VTs and parents please suggest useful information or links so that the page is valuable for families! Please email your suggestions for additional information and links to [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au)

## Student News

- Former Support Skills Student, **Shaun**, was recently awarded the prize for Dux of Year 11 at the annual Celebration Night (prize giving night) for Kingswood College. It is a whole school event held at the Robert Blackwood Hall at Monash University. This is the top academic award for his year! Shaun's proud mother writes, "We know that he has worked very hard all year and kept up with the large volume of homework, practice exams and even managed to do a Year 12 subject at the same time." We all congratulate Shaun on his efforts and wish him well with his final year in 2012.
- Brother and sister **Thientuoc** and **Thanh** recently each received a brand new BrailleNote Apex after both borrowing a BrailleNote loan unit last term – and LOVING them. Congratulations to Visiting Teacher **Emily White** and the staff at Kingsville PS for their hard work in securing the funding for these expensive pieces of equipment and all the best to the students – we look forward to more interesting articles for The Bulletin!

## Any Romeo and Juliets Out There?

Yes it's that time of year again and we have at least 10 requests for Romeo and Juliet, among other things! So if you have any audio, large print, or braille books lying around and you think your students could part with them, could you please send them back to the SVRC? Thanks!

## Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Lee Clarke, Professor Jill Keeffe and Emily White. If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please email 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>

**Statewide Vision Resource Centre**  
presents

# **Expo of Access Technology for People with Vision Impairments**

**When:** Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011  
10.00am - 2.30pm

**Where:** Statewide Vision Resource Centre  
370 Springvale Road, Donvale  
in the grounds of Heatherwood School  
(please park in the **lower carpark** at the Sports Centre next door)

Displays and demonstrations of the latest in access technology for people who are vision impaired.

Come and see computer technology which enlarges or talks, electronic magnifier units, calculators, games, 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 access technology for people who are vision impaired.

**Plan to spend the time to try out something new!**

**Cost:** Free (and no need to register)  
**For further details:** contact Deb Lewis (03) 9841 0242  
or email [svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au)