

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 8
Monday 28th May 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2012

Support for Students with Vision Impairments – The Psychologist’s Role Presented by Geoff Bowen, Psychologist, SVRC	Monday 4 June
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 BrailleNote (not for absolute beginners) Ramona Mandy, Humanware 11.30-1.00 JAWS (not for absolute beginners) Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Braille Music for VTs and Music Teachers Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 13 June
Dot Power – Literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tue 19 June
25th National Braille Music Camp – NSW	23-30 June

The program for 2012 is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

Extra Support for Students with Disabilities

Media Release DEECD, Friday 18th May, 2012

Education Minister Martin Dixon today announced all Victorian Government schools will receive a share in \$37.2 million of additional funding under the More Support for Students with Disabilities program.

From next month, all Government schools and students with disabilities will benefit from the one-off grant under a National Partnership between the State Government and the Commonwealth. Mr Dixon said the funding built on the Victorian Coalition Government’s significant commitment to supporting students with a disability.

“Since coming to office this Government has invested more than \$170 million of additional funding into the program for students with a disability and transport for these students, and made the largest single investment in capital works in special and autistic schools in more than a decade,” Mr Dixon said.

“This additional \$37.2 million will be invested in programs we have designed to increase the capacity of mainstream schools to ensure families have real choice in education for students with a disability. (Continued next page)

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“Schools will use this new funding in ways that best suit the needs of their students with disabilities,” Mr Dixon said.

Mr Dixon said the Victorian Government had given principals, in partnership with their parent communities, the freedom to make decisions that suit their school communities and the needs of their students.

Mr Dixon said schools may choose to use the funding to:

- purchase additional specialist technology and software, including real time captioning for students who are deaf or vision-impaired;
- provide extra teacher training on supporting students with disabilities;
- enhance support for students with disabilities starting primary or secondary school; or
- increase curriculum support for teachers.

A trial project to provide Autism Inclusion Support Co-ordinators in 15 schools across the state will also be funded, and a suite of online learning modules will be developed for teachers.

These will cover: Supporting students with learning difficulties and dyslexia; Autism; the Disability Discrimination Act and Education Standards; and Speech, Language and Communication disabilities.

Schools will also be able to access direct support for students and teachers from disability agencies including Downs Syndrome Victoria and Autism Victoria.

Vision Australia Library: Membership for students, a few new things to know

From Marion Blazé

For a long time we have been highly recommending that our students take up a Vision Australia Library Membership so that they can receive regular audio books for leisure and school reading. For a few years, Vision Australia was also able to lend our students a DAISY player on which to play their audio books. This was done under a specific grant which has now run out.

But, students can now rent a DAISY player for \$7 a month or \$79 a year, or, better still, download DAISY player software to their own device. The Vision Australia website has lots of information on which devices can have DAISY players installed. Students can then receive audio books on disk or just download books. Under this membership, provision of audio books is free. A membership form is on the website.

There is also the option of a “Student Services” membership. This form of membership is also explained on their website. Go to “Kids @ Library” and then “Student Materials Production Services”. Students can request that specific material be produced in their alternative format, but there is a cost involved. A table of costs is on the website.

BTW, “DAISY” stands for “Digital Accessible Information System” and is a highly navigable form of audio books, because you can find chapters and pages and even individual words.

You can even connect with the Library on Twitter - how current is that?!

For more information go to the Vision Australia website at <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au>

What Does Light Mean to Me?

Source: Vision Australia Website

<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/info.aspx?page=823&news=2557>

When Rob Caslick discovered that 90% of people who are blind could sense light, he created a new form of signage using LED's to write braille.

An exhibition showcasing this innovation, called cBraille, is being held at Federation Square in June.

The exhibition will feature 12 panels of LED braille quotes and anecdotes about light and blindness, and four panels of the practical application of LED braille. It will be a visual and sensorial treat that is expected to stimulate engagement with the community and raise awareness for people who are blind or have low vision.

There will also be an audio component of the exhibition which will include a narration of people's responses to the following question:
"What does light mean to me?"

If you are blind or have low vision, please send your response to this question to Rob at robcaslick@gmail.com or call him on 0421 861 434.

SplashTop: Connect Whiteboard to iPad or Computer

From Lyn Wilson – Vision Support Teacher – NSW

SplashTop apps allow remote viewing of PCs, Macs and interactive whiteboards on the iPad, here are Lyn's comments:

Have you seen the App SplashTop? A class teacher in Wagga was given permission by the Principal to access the school network using an iPad.

After downloading the App to the iPad and then a streamer to the Smartboard he can view everything on the iPad as well as capturing hard copies. It works brilliantly and has many applications for students to access laptops and monitors.

The website is <http://www.SplashtopRemote.com>

Paralympic Talent Search

The objective of the Paralympic Talent Search Program is to identify people with physical disabilities, vision impairments or intellectual disabilities who display the athletic potential to one day make it to Paralympic level competition. A secondary goal is to help introduce people with disabilities into regular sport and physical activity and is a great way to promote your sport to prospective members.

When: Saturday 16th June 2012

Time: 10:00am to 1:00pm

Where: Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (Aughtie Drive, Albert Park, VICTORIA 3206)

For more information: Jacob.Hardiman@paralympic.org.au

flick – a new CCTV from Optek Systems

From Terry Kenaghan, Optek Systems

I have just received a new CCTV system that is quite accurately described as revolutionary. It is called the “flick”, and consists of a lightweight motorised camera, that connects with either a laptop, desktop, or tablet windows computer (the Macintosh version is targeted for release June – July)

The flick has its own internal 8 hour battery, and some of the features are:

- The user doesn't have to move the paper or the camera, by moving the mouse, or using the keyboard, (or a finger on a tablet computer) the camera will scroll, magnify, and also move to the distance viewing mode.
- It has up to 40 x magnification and a wide range of foreground background colours.
- In addition it can also store images on the computer, or recognise and store the text and can also OCR, and then SPEAK the text.

For more information go to the Optek Systems website: <http://opteksystems.com.au/flick.htm>



Echolocation

This YouTube video shows how a man who is blind uses echolocation to navigate around his environment and his technique for teaching others to use it

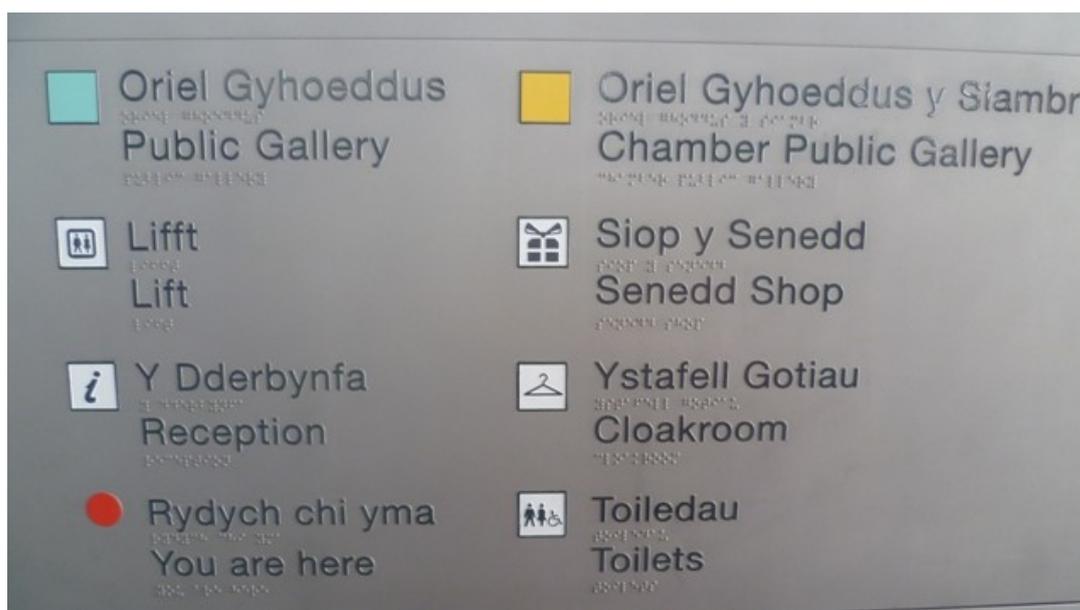
YouTube Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpXEmD0gu0Q&feature=related>

MyStudyBar

Some of you might be familiar with a program called MyVisBar which installs a floating toolbar onto the desktop that has a number of options for students with vision impairments. For example it has options for magnification and voice. MyStudyBar has taken the features of this program and added a few more to enable students with learning disabilities to also use the tool for learning and study. For more information about MyStudyBar go: http://eduapps.org/?page_id=7

Braille in the Welsh Community

Toni Chilton sent us this picture of this key to a map in Wales.



*Pictured above: Key to public map in Wales.
It has the English and Welsh words in print and braille.*

Thank you, Jetstar!!

From Marion Blazé

When I last took home SVRC's collection of sleepshades for a wash, I noticed some were getting a bit shabby, so I wrote to several airlines asking if they could spare a few to boost our collection.

I am pleased to say that Jetstar has kindly sent us a package of 30 new sleepshades for use in our 'blindness simulations'. Thank you, Jetstar!!

Book for Kids About Difference

Barbara Crowden, Support Teacher Vision, Bega High School writes:

I thought I'd draw your attention to the first of 11 books partly illustrated by one of my students. Madaline has Down Syndrome and is a student at Moruya High School. She is also vision impaired. I worked with Maddy at Narooma PS for her first 3 years of school and last year reunited with her at Moruya HS. She is now 16. The book is a children's book about chickens and what happens when they get sore legs. It's about acceptance of differences and is aimed at Pre School. Maddy's mum Hellen has written the text, and Maddy's Auntie Chris has done the illustrations.

Visit: <http://www.chookhousepress.com.au>

Shoot for the Moon Charity Concert

Report by Lyn Robinson

Around 400 people were treated to a very special evening at the “Shoot for the Moon” Charity Concert at Chapel off Chapel on Thursday 17th May. Many people from the blindness and vision impairment community attended including visiting teachers, students (past and present), brothers, sisters, parents, friends and people who just wanted to enjoy a great night’s entertainment.

The evening began with Chelsea Plumley, donning a blue Space Camp suit and simulating weightlessness, while being held aloft by three very strong people. Chelsea wove her magic introducing each performer by playing the first few notes of the theme from “Close Encounters of the Third Kind” on *xylophone* – you know the one! Jonathon Welch and the choir continued the space theme with “Ground Control to Major Tom” and later Mark Holden joined the choir to sing “Everybody Knows”.

It was a fun night which concluded with the students presenting flowers to Danielle Matthews for organising the event and then it was everyone on stage for the finale – Don’t Stop Believing.

Thanks also to Mark Holden, Jonathon Welch and the choir, Christie Whelan, Amy Lepahmer, Francine Cain, Kellie Rode, Rosie Harris, James D Smith, Matthew Robinson, Bree Langridge, Erin Hasan, Susan Anne Walker, Melissa Langton, Georgia Robertson, Madeleine Andreopolous and the musicians Adam Przewlocki – piano, Gavin Parker – bass and Manny Kechayas – drums.

The students are on the way to raising the money they will need to get to Space Camp thanks to all involved.

To hear Danielle Matthew’s performance from the Shoot for the Moon Concert go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjzAhVOx1BU>

Here are a couple of snaps from the night.

Picture 1 (from the left): Zac (Space Camper 2012), Chelsea Plumley, Rory Fraser and Brendan (Space Camper 2012). Photo by Whitney Arlana Butterworth.



Picture 2 below: On stage for the finale, from left Maddy (Space Camper 2012), and Jacky (Space Camper 2012). Photo by Whitney Arlana Butterworth.



ABC Podcasts for VCE English Texts

If you would like a fun way to review your VCE English texts then you might like to try the podcasts from a program called Sunday school with Libby Gorr. Libby covers a different book or film each week with a teacher of VCE English. The discussions sometimes include interviews with the authors or script writers so it gives some fascinating insights into the texts. Books and films covered so far include:

- A Christmas Carol
- ByPass: Story of a Road
- Cat's Eye
- Imaginative Landscape
- Interpreter of Maladie's
- Life of Pi
- The Crucible
- The Old Man Who Read Love Stories
- Things We Didn't See Coming
- Twelve Angry Men
- Year of Wonders

To download the latest podcasts from Sunday school with Libby Gorr go to:

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2012/03/16/3455016.htm?site=melbourne&ref=front-page-slider-melbourne-regional-landing>

Staff News

- Congratulations to **Prue Gunner**, Visiting Teacher – Barwon South Western Region, who has just completed her Masters of Special Education. We want some pictures of your graduation Prue – congratulations from all of us!
- Hume Visiting Teacher, **Faye Squires**, will be off in the wilds of East Africa in a couple of weeks! We wish her plenty of adventures – stay safe, Faye!

Student News

- **Elliot** from Wodonga is a competitive runner but he recently entered the school Long Jump and Javelin. His Visiting Teacher **Faye Squires** tells us that not only did he win the Long Jump for his age group, he also broke the school record AND came a creditable third in the Javelin against his sighted peers. Perhaps we'll be seeing him in the Paralympics before long!
- Year 12 student **Dan** from Upwey is travelling as the youngest member of the Australian Blind Cricket Squad to play the English team during May-June this year. As part of his VCE Media Studies Dan will be keeping a blog called "Blindly Abroad". He'll keep you up to date with the latest gossip, news, scores and match reviews: <http://blindlyabroad.blogspot.com.au/>. And for more information about the tour, visit Blind Cricket Australia web at <http://www.blindcricketaustralia.com.au/> and the Victorian Blind Cricket Association web site at <http://www.vbca.org.au/>
- Past student **Kate** has written a wonderful article about the life changing experience of travelling to Space Camp in Huntsville Alabama. To read Kate's story go to: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/EPspacecampKate.shtml>
- Fresh from the success of the Shoot for the Moon concert, **Brendan** has been busy appearing on last Friday night's football telecast of the Collingwood Geelong match. He appeared on the ground at the start of the match near where the players ran onto the field and Nathan Buckley shook his hand. After the match he went into the Collingwood rooms (yes sadly he's a Collingwood supporter) and joined in the celebrations.
- **Zac** and his family and friends have been fundraising for Space Camp in Zac's hometown of Bendigo. They have raised nearly \$3,500 from a Mystery Night and a Girls' Night In. Sounds fun!

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Marion Blazé, Danielle Matthews, Toni Chilton, Deb Lewis and Rod Pritchard.

If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please email Lyn Robinson lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au

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