

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 9

Monday 11th June 2012

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

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2012

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>

Great news for students with vision impairment in Victoria

Under the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership, a range of strategies are being implemented in Victorian government schools. One of these strategies is “Vision assistive technology and teacher training”. Assistive technology will enhance access to learning opportunities for students with vision impairment across Victoria.

In partnership with the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC), assistive technology, including devices and software, will be provided to support students with vision impairment. In addition, training will be provided for teachers in the effective use of technology within students’ classrooms.

What next?

The provision of assistive technology will take place over 2012 and 2013. Initially, the SVRC will directly contact schools with students who form the first target group of this initiative.

Later in 2012, and into 2013, SVRC will communicate details of subsequent rollout of devices, software and teacher training.

Visiting Teachers will play an important liaison role in supporting this initiative.

For more information: SVRC will provide key details and updates for parents, carers and school staff via their website: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/index.shtml>

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Paralympic Games Profile

The London 2012 Paralympic Games are coming up so in the coming weeks we thought we would profile some of our Paralympians with vision impairments.

Goalball - Tyan Taylor



Date of birth	23 March 1990
Sport	Goalball
Classification	B3
Disability	Vision impaired
How acquired	Ocular albinism
Residence	Normanhurst, NSW
Occupation	Teacher's aid
Sport Club	NSW Institute of Sport
First competed for Aust.	2010

Tyan Taylor is a relative newcomer to the sport of goalball, having been introduced to playing the sport by her vision support teacher at high school.

However, it was actually years earlier that Tyan first saw goalball. Watching it as a 10-year-old, her grandmother suggested that one day Tyan could play goalball and if she put her mind to it, might even be able to compete at the Paralympic Games.

Fast forward nine years and in 2009 Tyan made her competitive debut off the back of a stellar first year at the national championships, where she was the second highest goal scorer. She was then called up to the Australian Women's goalball team for the 2010 World Championships and has since been a regular fixture at all international events. She describes gaining a more permanent position on the team as a major personal achievement.

Nicknamed 'little girl' for being the smallest on the team, Tyan more than makes up for it with her loud and bubbly personality. She looks up to Paralympic swimming bronze medallist Sarah Rose and also credits Australian Paralympic Committee High Performance Manager Chris Nunn for not only motivating her, but introducing her to the music of Miley Cyrus, after he played one of the pop star's songs at a training camp.

Tyan is an avid Parramatta Eels football fan and also enjoys soccer and basketball. She describes sky diving as the most exciting thing she has done and bungee jumping as the scariest.

In the immediate future Tyan aims to represent Australia at the London 2012 Paralympic Games and beyond that would love to pursue a career as a vision support teacher.

Source: Paralympic Website: <http://www.paralympic.org.au>

Swimming for People with Vision Impairments (of all ages)

From instructor, John Groom

If you are vision impaired and interested in learning to swim, or to improve your swimming style, or simply to enjoy the freedom of splashing around in lovely warm water, we would like to hear from you.

Shortly we are intending to run another swimming programme at (Re-Creation gymnasiums) swimming pool which is adjacent to the Hampton Railway station.

The environment at this small pool provides a feeling of safety, the water being quite shallow and warm, and we provide one on one support in the water.

Our fully qualified swimming coaches offer support to all ages and are specialists with children and teenagers. Support is provided from the building entrance to the change rooms, to the pool and back again, as well as in the pool.

The sessions will last approximately 45 minutes and costs \$3.00.

In the past we have run sessions at 2.00PM on Thursdays but will consider any other timing that may suit you.

Feel free to discuss this with Blind Sports Victoria's volunteer: John Groom on 9557 1716, 0400 993059 or e-mail jrgroom@westnet.com.au

Student Writing: Gym

This persuasive piece of writing was written by Year 3 student Charlotte on a BrailleNote.

Gym

By Charlotte

I believe that Gym is one of the best things.

Firstly at gym we get to do Trampoline, Forward rolls and Cartwheels also we get to go on the Beams and I love Gym a lot.

Secondly it is for Vision impaired people and the teachers help us by showing us how to do it. They get on the Trampoline they hold my hands and I do Star jumps, Bottom jumps, Twists and I can jump really high.

The first beam is really small and I can walk on it with a small beanbag.

The next beam is a bench and I can do bunny hops on it.

The third beam is as tall as the foam stairs and I can walk backwards, sideways and forwards.

The last beam is a bit taller than the foam stairs and I can walk forwards, backwards and sideways.

Lastly it makes you flexibly and healthy it is really good to be healthy.

Do you want your children to be healthy?

In conclusion I think this gym is one of the best things because it has shown us how to do Gym skills that we wouldn't have known before.

Thanks to Susan Botta from Fitzroy North Primary School for sending in this lovely piece of writing. If Charlotte has convinced you and you would like your child to attend gym please contact Essendon Keilor Gymnastics Academy and ask to speak to the co-ordinator of the program. Phone 03 9336 4077 or contact your local Gymnastics group to see what arrangements can be made.

Website: <http://www.ekga.gymnastics.org.au>

Useful Websites

Compiled By James Malone – Work Experience Student, SVRC

Audio games.

<http://www.audiogames.net>

A site that contains links to many audio games and audio game sites. Even contains a forum for people to discuss a variety of topics, as well as post their own game creations, or to comment on other games.

Audio Games

<http://www.kaldobsky.com/audiogames>

Contains audio games created by Jeremy Kaldobsky, who is a sighted game developer. This means the games that he creates have a rather mainstream feel to them, such as you would find on an Xbox360, or Playstation3. Jeremy's latest creation called Swamp, has revolutionised the audio game community. If you wish to read about that directly, then feel free to head on over to his site and look for the Swamp heading.

Technology

<http://www.applevis.com>

A site with an extensive list of accessible apps for the iOS platform. Currently, iOS is present on the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad.

Screen Readers.

<http://www.freedomscientific.com>

The homepage of Freedom Scientific, makers of JAWS and MAGic. There are free demos of both products you can download to try out for yourself.

<http://www.nvda-project.org>

Home of the free and open source screen reader known as NVDA.

Sports.

<http://www.blindsports.org.au/Blind/>

The official Blind Sports Victoria site. Contains links to sports for people who are blind or have low vision, as well as general news in the blind sporting community.

General Interest.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/>

A link to ABC's Ramp Up, discusses many aspects of disability. This includes topical issues, opinions and stories around the daily challenges facing people with a disability in the wider community.

Podcasts.

<http://www.blindcooltech.com>

A site with an extensive list of podcasts, ranging from cooking to travel, to various items of technology. Currently, there is over 1500 podcasts on the site.

FS cast.

<http://www.freedomscientific.com/FSCast/default.asp>

Freedom Scientifics monthly podcast. This podcast looks at every aspect of the company, including Jaws updates, as well as new devices they are putting on the market. Sometimes, they'll interview someone from their company about their life story, and how they came to work at Freedom Scientific.

A few of my favourites apps

By Lyn Robinson

Here are a few apps which may be suitable for young children with vision impairments. Some of these apps may also be suitable for students with additional disabilities.

Cause and Effect / Visual Skills

- **Art of Glow** – Draw lines or shapes, e.g. heart, circle, and triangles. The lines and shapes cycle through different colours. These flashing images may not be suitable for some students.
- **Baby buttons** – A nice simple design. The buttons are colourful and have different shapes and sizes. They make a sound when you touch them.
- **Baby Vision** – Simple bold black and white drawings appears on the screen. The child can touch anywhere on the screen to get a new picture. Some of the pictures are quite abstract.
- **Barnyard Dance**- The child can tap the screen to make the animals dance. Makes animal noises.
- **Doodle buddy** – This app is a bit more complex than the other two draw programs. As well as draw you can stamp shapes or stickers on the screen. You can also add text. It has white background and the ability to change screen background if you want.
- **Farm Animals** – nice clear bold pictures of farm animals. Touch the screen to hear animal sound.
- **Fun Bubbles** – There are a number of “bubble making apps”, this one is quite nice and simple. Touch the screen to make colourful bubbles. Touch the screen again to burst the bubbles.
- **Glow Paint** – Students enjoy the vibrant colours on this app. You can change the colours and the size and shape of the brush. This app has a black background.
- **iLoveFireworks** – Student touches the screen and colourful fireworks appear.
- **LED Light Box** –This app turns the iPad into a light box. There is a choice of colours from bright white, soft grey to red, allowing for student preference. You can then be place objects onto the iPad for the student to explore visually. E.g. clear coloured plastic shapes, tissue paper, buttons, sparkly toys, bold line drawings.
- **Peekaboo Farm and Peekaboo Wild** – The students touches the barn or grass to reveal an animal. Comes with animal sounds and bold colourful graphics without being too complex. It has the word for the animal in print and it reads the word out loud.
- **Pocket Pond** – This app makes you iPad look like a real fish pond. Touch the pond and hear the fish swish through the water. Very Zen! You can add lily pads, fish and fish food to the pond.
- **Swipe Tap Tap** – tap according to the pattern on the screen. Quite fast and challenging. Good for visual memory, practising gestures.
- **Tap-n-see-zoo** – Designed especially for kids with cortical visual impairment (CVI). An animal character moves slowly around the screen, when touched there is the sound of a baby laughing and the size of the animal increases. You can set the colour, size, sound and animal in this app. All designed with the colour preferences of CVI kids in mind.

Auditory Skills

- **BL Tickle** – a face giggles when you touch it
- **Blind Memory** – auditory memory game, adds one more direction each time. Practise gestures e.g. swipe left, right, up, down. Can get quite challenging.
- **Sound Prism** – touch the screen and music happens. The sounds all harmonise so it’s easy to make a nice sound.
- **Talking Girl** – a funny voice repeats what you say
- **Xylophone** – Be a xylophone expert in seconds with this cute app. A colourful xylophone appears on a bright green background. Tap to play. Simple clear graphics.

International Year of Reading - why should our students be reading more?

By Marion Blazé

I recently attended a PD afternoon with David Hornsby, on why teachers should be trying to increase the volume of children's reading, and came away with some thoughts for our students. I have always believed that even though reading can be difficult or tiring for our VI students, they still need to read to become good readers.

David said that READING (just reading) is a powerful contributor to the development of accurate, fluent, high-comprehension reading.

Classrooms nowadays do a lot of 'pseudo reading'. Unfortunately, many classroom practices reduce reading volume. Activities with bits of text don't build the reading stamina or sustained attention required for deep engagement with text.

From Prep to Yr 12, all kids should sit and read silently every day. 50% of school reading should be silent reading – not just reading-related activities.

The main purpose of children's take-home readers is to have a positive experience, so books should be chosen below the child's actual reading level.

Take-home readers should be read TO the child, WITH the child, and BY the child. This emphasises the importance of braille reading children having both braille and print copies of books for their take-home readers.

Research shows a strong link between home reading and proficiency in reading:

Minutes per day	Words per year	Percentile rank
0	0	2 nd
1	51,000	10 th
5	251,000	30 th
10	601,000	50 th
17	1,168,000	70 th
33	2,357,000	90 th
67	4,733,000	98 th

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds who read at home out-performed students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds who didn't read at home.

Feel free to share these thoughts with your teachers.

Braille for the Little Ones

All of the "readers" that are suitable for early braille readers are available on the shelves in their VELS (and Reading Recovery) Levels for browsing!

Come and visit the ever-growing collection of books, which are partially or fully contracted, for more books for your early braille students to read. Borrowing is easy – just make a note of the student name and the barcode etc near Dianne's desk. More books for more kids!!! Hooray!!!

Free Audio Stories: Storynory

From Phia Damsma, SPEVI

I just came across a website called Storynory, an online treasure-trove of free audio stories. They offer a mixture of original stories, fairytales, verse and stories from around the world. There is also a large choice in educational stories and stories to support English language students. Having published an audio story every week since November 2005, Storynory has grown and grown in popularity, and now around half a million MP3 files are downloaded every month from their servers. Services such as iTunes make it easy to transfer the audio onto iPods and other portable players. All the Storynory stories are beautifully read by professional actors. And yes, they are free.

Website: <http://storynory.com/>

JVIB Online, May 2012

The May edition of the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness is now available at the AFB <http://www.afb.org>

Low Vision

Barriers to Low Vision Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Approach

Kenneth Southall and Walter Wittich

Personnel Preparation

Comparison of Levels of Satisfaction with Distance Education and On-campus Programs

Dae Shik Kim, Helen Lee, and Annette Skellenger

Psychosocial Issues

Personality Characteristics of South Korean Students with Visual Impairments Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Sunhi Bak

Research Report

Synthesis of Available Accommodations for Students with Visual Impairments on Standardized Assessments

Derrick W. Smith and Sheila Amato

Practice Perspectives

Looking to the Future: What Do Young Blind Children Learn When Travelling with Dogs?

Jane N. Erin

A Perspective on Teaching Early Harness Travel to Young Blind Children Using Children's Visual Companion Dogs

Mary J. Tellefson

This Mattered to Me

"Problems in the Construction of Reality in Congenitally Blind Children," by S. Santin & J.

Nesker-Simmons

Recommended by Sharon Zell Sacks

Web Special Feature

"Problems in the Construction of Reality in Congenitally Blind Children," A classic article from 1977 by S. Santin & J. Nesker-Simmons

How do I use a switch with an iPad?

From Jan Farrall – Spectronics Blog

Over the last four weeks, as I have been spending time in schools and giving workshops, one of the most common questions I have had is “How do I use a switch with an iPad?”. Talking with Alex Dunn, this is also one of the most common questions she gets asked as well!

For this reason, Alex and I decided to collaborate on a Switch Accessible Apps resource – listing all of the switch accessible Apps that we are aware of and their switch and scanning options. Hopefully this resource will help people out with the information they need about this topic – but since this is one of the most common questions I’m being asked I also thought it was an appropriate topic for my first blog post on my new blog!



To read more of Jan’s Blog go to:

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/blog/apps-and-mobile-learning/how-do-i-use-a-switch-with-an-ipad/>

To download a PDF file containing “Switch Accessible Apps”:

<http://www.janefarrall.com/html/resources/Switch%20Accessible%20Apps%20for%20iPad-1.pdf>

YouTube Tutorial – iPad Accessibility Features

Robin Spinks from RNIB gives an overview of the accessibility features built-in to the Apple iPad, iPhone and iPod touch. Robin explains the accessibility features for people with low vision including magnification, inverted colours, iBooks and an introduction to gestures. The iPad tutorial is available at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KnVBYDWIkQ&feature=related>

Community Member Honored

Source: Whitehorse Leader, 16 May 2012

“Peter Rickards, of Nunawading, was the 2012 winner of the Emerging Leader Award. This award recognises those who have made significant contributions for people with a disability.

Mr Rickards, the founding president of Australians for Disability and Diversity Employment, said: ADDE is a self-advocacy organisation aiming to increase employment opportunities for the more than 60 per cent of Australians with disabilities of working age who are unemployed. Mr Rickards is happy to get this award but he believes there is a long way to go. He would like the public to be aware that despite Australia’s economy performing so well in world terms, we are 27th out of 29 OECD countries in employment participation of people with disabilities.”

Congratulations Peter!

Student News

Dream lift-off for blind Dingley Village teenager

From Mordialloc Chelsea Leader – June 4 2012

“JUST because I can’t see the stars doesn’t mean I can’t reach for them.”

The motto for the space camp for visually impaired students says it all for Brendan Spencer.

Blind since birth, the Dingley Village teenager is going all out to raise the \$6000 he needs to attend the camp at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama, in September.

The 16-year-old said the planetary system and gravity have always intrigued him, but his determination to attend the space camp was sparked after a friend went to an earlier camp and “came back a different person”.

“It changed their perspective on things,” Brendan said.

“Because I can’t see the stars, I have been interested in how they are and what happens in space.”

Camp activities include living in a simulated space station, a simulated mission into space, scuba diving and learning about astrophysics and space/rocket science.

Students are encouraged to be fully independent in all activities. Brendan, a year 10 student at Parkdale Secondary College who lives with his aunt, is one of four Victorian vision-impaired students fundraising to attend the camp.

If you can provide financial support to the students, phone Leanne Nagel at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre on 9841 0242.

Source: <http://mordialloc-chelsea-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/dream-lift-off-for-blind-dingley-village-teenager/>



Staff News

Garry Stinchcombe is now employed at the SVRC five days per week – which is absolutely terrific! Not only will he be coordinating the Support Skills Program but he will also be overseeing the SVRC PD program.

Contact Garry on his edumail address: stinchcombe.garry.g@edumail.vic.gov.au or via the Support Skills email address: ssp@svrc.vic.edu.au

Michael Donnelly, SVRC Support Skills Art Teacher is taking part in an exhibition to raise funds for the Hope for Cambodian Children Foundation. The foundation has built a centre in Battambang Cambodia to care for up to 120 children. Hope for Cambodian Children Foundation Inc. (HOPE) aims to give a future to children whose lives have been affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Cambodia, and seeks to provide support, healthcare and education to children and families.

What: Finding Hope – Art Exhibition at Kinross Gallery

Where: Arts and Spirituality Centre, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak

When: Opening Night 15th June at 6.00 pm (the exhibition runs from the 8th June – 1st July).

Cost: \$15.00 Entry

Bookings: <http://sww.trybooking.com/BMQZ>

News from the Field

From Rod Beatie, Director, Director RIDBC Renwick Centre

“It is a great pleasure to be able to inform you that our colleague, **Frances Gentle**, has today received confirmation of the award of her Doctor of Philosophy degree. Frances’ thesis titled ‘Transforming the education systems for children with disability in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste’ was submitted earlier this year for examination by a panel of international experts in the field and has been duly considered to meet all of the requirements for the award of the degree. Frances will graduate formally (in cap and gown) in October but is now officially entitled to the title of Doctor with all the rights and privileges that pertain to the degree. Frances, we congratulate you!

Braille Aide Wanted

Western Metropolitan Region’s Wembley Primary School in Yarraville, just off the Westgate Bridge, needs an Education Support staff member (Integration Aide) with braille skills. Please call Myriam Ash on 0407 058833.

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Marion Blazé, Jeni Blake and Deb Lewis.

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>