

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 10

Friday 20th June 2014

SPEVI Conference – Melbourne

Monday 12th to Thursday 15th January 2015

Please plan to come!

Professional Development Activities for Term 3-4, 2014

Fliers for the SVRC Professional Learning programs are available as attachments to Issue 1 of The Bulletin or can be downloaded from the SVRC website: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml

Please note: the SVRC encourages attendance in person or via video link – please be in touch if you'd like to “virtually” attend any of these sessions.

Event	Date
Skill Power Workshops – Please request a session	Wednesday 23 July
Skill Power Workshops – Please request a session	Wednesday 6 August
Including Students with Vision Impairments in Physical Education, Recreation and Sport – see flier: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PLPpe2014.pdf	Monday 11 August
Skill Power Workshops – Please request a session	Wed 20 August
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 9 September
Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama	20-25 September
No SPEVI Day this year – Please come to the SPEVI Conference instead!	-
Dot Power – for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 18 Nov
Xmas Morning Tea – all invited – please RSVP	Wednesday 3 Dec

Physical Education PD – Tuesday

For: PE or classroom teachers, integration aides and visiting teachers

When: Monday 11 August from 9:00am to 3:30pm

RSVP: essential – pd@svrc.vic.edu.au

More information: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PLPpe2014.pdf

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Why We Love ‘Dot Power Day’?

From Marion Blazé

10 braille-reading students and 15 adults visited SVRC to attend the Term 2 Dot Power Day on June 17 this week. One 6 year old came late because he had his piano exam in the morning! Of the adults, 3 were VTs, 2 were aides, 2 were Vision Australia Early Childhood Educators, 6 were parents and 2 were school teachers (1 from Darwin!!).

The amazing Taryn, with help from our braille production staff, produced 75 booklets and 51 handouts in braille, including 15 tactile pictures – that’s 698 braille pages altogether!!! All the children took home 5 braille books, including 1 which was a compilation of their own braille and tactile graphics produced during the day. Thanks so much to Taryn and Maria for that rushed job!

Our theme was NUMBERS (can you tell from this report?). We sang number songs, played number games, the children got themselves into numbered groups and then we read the story of Stone Soup, with an appropriate number of vegetables in the recipe, of course (see top photo).

Our very talented and energetic SVRC teacher Emily White, kept all the children active and engaged throughout the day, thanks Emily!

By the end of the day, all children could find a number sign (dots 3, 4, 5, 6) in a flash!

Some wonderful conversations were over-heard. Here’s 1:

Child 1 to child 2: “Are you fully blind or a bit blind?”

Child 2 to child 1: “Yes I’m fully blind.”

Child 1 to child 2: “It’s a bit annoying, isn’t it?”

Child 2 to child 1: “No not really, but I don’t like it when people treat me like a little child when I’m actually 6 years old!”

The aim of the Dot Power Program is to bring young braille-reading students together to read and write braille with other children and adults who read braille. As a side-benefit, adults attend for networking between parents and ‘incidental PD’ for teachers and aides.

Thanks to all the staff who supported the activities, to Michael Kelly for the sound recording and to Deb Davidson for the 271 photographs!



Vision Impaired Travel Pass

The Vision Impaired Travel Pass is for people who are legally blind (as defined in the Social Security Act 1991).

The Vision Impaired Travel Pass is combined with the myki card and entitles the pass holder to free travel on Victoria's public transport network.

The Vision Impaired Travel Pass entitles the pass holder to free travel on:

- train, tram and bus passenger services operating in metropolitan Melbourne;
- train and bus passenger services operated by V/Line throughout regional Victoria; and
- other public transport services operated under contract or service agreement with Public Transport Victoria.

Free travel passes do not necessarily apply to NSW TrainLink, Great Southern Railway, airport services, tourist railways, privately run bus services and chartered trains, trams and buses. Please check with the relevant operator before booking or travelling.

Download the information and application form: <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/PDFs/Application-forms/Vision-Impaired-Info-and-App-Form.pdf>

The Victorian Companion Card

The Companion Card is issued to people with a significant, permanent disability, who can demonstrate that they are unable to access most community activities and venues without attendant care support. The cost of the ticket for a carer may be significantly reduced or complementary for some events or activities if it is deemed that the person with the disability or impairment requires a carer to attend. The following information is from The Victorian Companion Card Website:

Who is a Companion?

A companion is someone who provides attendant care type support to a person with a disability to assist them to participate at a venue or activity. Attendant care support includes significant assistance with mobility, communication, self-care or learning, where the use of aids, equipment or alternative strategies do not enable the person to carry out these tasks.

A companion could be a paid or unpaid assistant or carer, which may include a friend or a family member. Cardholders can choose whom they wish to have as their companion, and this may vary depending on the activity and the occasion.

A person is not entitled to a Companion Ticket if he or she is accompanying the cardholder for solely social or recreational reasons, without providing essential attendant care support required by the cardholder, due to their disability, in order to access that particular venue or activity.

Public Transport Accepts Companion Card

Companion Card can now be used on all Victorian public transport services. Cardholders can have their companions travel without charge, on all train and tram services, and all metropolitan bus services, country trains, coach and town bus services.

For more information go to: www.companioncard.org.au/index.htm

Multi-Purpose Taxi Program

The Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) provides subsidised taxi fares for Victorians with severe and permanent disability who also experience financial hardship. Eligibility is based on the following:

- you must be a permanent Resident of Australia and live in Victoria.
- you must have a severe and permanent disability;
- you must have a disability that is not likely to improve with treatment;
- you must have a disability that prevents you from safely and independently using public transport.
- you must hold an applicable Centrelink or Department of Veterans Affairs pension card; or
- you must be able to show you have financial hardship by providing financial information.

For more information, visit: www.taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/mptp

iPad Video Tutorials

Need video tutorials about how to use the iPad? Well here they are! Hadley School for the Blind has a great series of tutorials called iFocus. They can be found on YouTube and explain how to use such things as:

- Low Vision Features of the iPad
- How to type with the onscreen keyboard with VoiceOver
- How to use Zoom
- How to use apps such as iBooks and Notes with Voiceover
- How to record a Voice Memo using VoiceOver

The tutorials explain concepts that may not necessarily be obvious to a blind user who is new to the device eg how far apart your fingers need to be when using a two finger tap. There are tutorials on using VoiceOver for beginners and advanced users. “iFocus Advanced Gestures in Voiceover iOS 7” had some very good tips.

You can view the videos on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/HadleySchool/videos

Possible Fix for iPad – UltraThin Keyboard Pairing

Some people have been experiencing problems with pairing the UltraThin Keyboards to their iPads. Here is a possible fix:

Make sure you have the latest software downloaded onto your iPad, therefore iOS 7.1.1, and then do the following:

1. Turn everything off i.e. Bluetooth off, keyboard off, iPad off. Make sure you power the iPad off completely by holding the on/off switch for 5 seconds and swiping the power down button.
2. Start everything up again - iPad on, Bluetooth on, keyboard on.
3. Push the re-set button for a few seconds on the UltraThin Keyboard - the re-set button is next to the on/off switch (right edge of the keyboard towards the back).
4. Go to Settings then go to Bluetooth. If you haven't already, turn Bluetooth on. Wait. Select the last “Logitech Ultrathin KB Cover” listed. The keyboard is paired when the word “Connected” appears.

Good luck from Lyn

Newer Technologies: SMART Braille™

I had the opportunity to meet with Laura Matz, Director of Marketing and Sales for Perkins Products, a division of Perkins School for the Blind at the recent Low Vision Conference. I had a chance to discuss the following products which were on display – comments follow:

SMART Braille

Like the old Perkins Braille, the SMART Braille has a mechanical action – but with a lot more features! The inbuilt LED screen provides real-time visual feedback. Immediate audio feedback also enables students to work more independently. This integrated system gives the student, teacher, parent and members of the child’s class access to the student’s work, improving the educational experience for all!



The LED screen displays print in a range of contrasting colours for low vision users, as well as SimBraille or large print! SMART Braille has a USB port for saving work as a .txt file and transfer of files from one device to another, a headphone jack and volume control. The battery is rechargeable and removable. SMART Braille can also work as a mechanical device, without the audio or visual outputs.

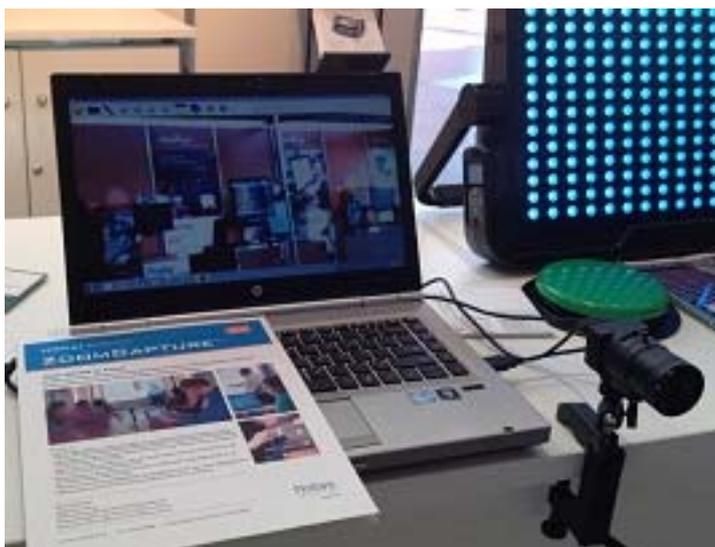
Further information can be found on the web: www.smartbraille.org and includes:

- a video on the SMART Braille
- a video on the importance of braille in a high tech world
- a print version of the audio instructions that come on the SMART Braille
- FAQs with videos which show how to do specific things like create a file, erase mistakes, etc.
- a webinar on teaching adults to learn braille

ZoomCapture

Designed by a student with impaired vision so that he could access the board during his lectures, this camera is very small, light-weight and portable; and features manual focus and zoom.

The compact camera can be desk- or laptop-mounted in a variety of ways. A tripod is included in the package, however the adjustable clamp offers improved picture stability (see photo).



Powered via USB, ZoomCapture can be used to view the board and take notes simultaneously. It is possible to record audio as well.

For further information, visit:

www.perkinsproducts.org/store/en/zoomcapture/1312-zoomcapture.html

Lazy Sue Braille Development Activity

From Paths to Literacy – 5th May 2014

The Lazy Sue Braille Development Activity is designed to support the practice and understanding of braille letters and contractions. It can be used to match word with objects, matching identical braille words or for identifying and matching braille contractions. The picture right shows a Lazy Susan with a rubber place mat attached. There are 5 plastic cups attached with Velcro. In each cup is a different object e.g. a piece of Lego. In the middle is a cup with wide icy pole sticks stuck in Playdoh. Each stick has a braille label on it which matches the object in the cup. In front of each cup is a card with the braille word on it.



Materials:

- Lazy Sue - IKEA
- 6 yoghurt pots
- Wide lollipop sticks or thick card cut to the size of lollipop sticks
- Playdoh
- Objects for each pot
- Braille labels with object names
- Dice
- Buzzers (Optional)
- Velcro
- Circular mat (IKEA) same size as Lazy Sue to allow for interchangeable activities (could cut a circle of card in place of mat.) Add Velcro squares around the mat.
- Braille labels with name of object, Velcro attached to back of each.



Procedure:

There are various ways this activity can be used, here are a few suggestions:

- The activity could be played by the child on their own, or along with other friends
- Children in turn throw the dice and on rolling a six, spin the Lazy Sue and then pick a lollipop stick from the tub in the middle.
- Child reads the Braille label, whether just the initial letter sound or whole word, or identifies the contraction as they read the word.
- Child then locates the correct object from the pots around the Lazy Sue and adds the lollipop stick to this pot.

Source: Gwyn - Education Consultant in Vision Impairment UK

For more information about this activity go to the Paths to Literacy Website

www.pathstoliteracy.org/strategies/lazy-sue-braille-development-activity

BrailleNote/JAWS Activities

Here's an idea from Emily White – it's a DIY story modelled on the MadLibs-style books from the USA...

A Do-It-Yourself Story about the THING and the Kid

by My Name

Once upon a time there was a THING. It was ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2. It had a NOUN for a head and NUMBER eyes. One day, as it was walking along, it came upon a kid. His/her name was KID'S NAME. The kid was just an average kid. He/she was just ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4. Sometimes he/she got picked on at school just because he/she was so ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4. He/she wished he/she was different. He/she wished he/she had some kind of special power or ability, like being able to VERB 1 or VERB 2 or VERB 3.

When the kid saw the THING, he/she was a bit worried at first. You would be too, if you came upon something that had a NOUN for a head and NUMBER eyes. But the THING seemed friendly enough and the kid could use a friend, so he/she tried not to worry himself too much about things like whether it might eat him/her or something.

The THING was pretty different. After all, it was ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2. And it did have a NOUN for a head and NUMBER eyes. The THING wished it was a little more average, to be honest. It used to get picked on by the other THINGS because it was so different. All the other THINGS weren't ADJECTIVE 1 or ADJECTIVE 2.

The THING and the kid took a long look at each other. Did I mention that the THING was magic? I didn't? Right. Well, the THING had some magic, but it only worked on others. So the THING couldn't change itself, but it could change others, like a tree or a rock or perhaps even a kid.

The kid said, "Hey, THING, I like how you're ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2. I wish I was ADJECTIVE 1 or ADJECTIVE 2." And the THING said, "Well KID'S NAME, I like how you're ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4. That's pretty darn cool." And they looked at each other for quite a long time (while the kid waited for the THING to work it out, because he/she wasn't about to tell a THING what to do... he/she was just a kid after all). Finally the THING said, "Hey KID'S NAME, I've got an idea. What if I made you ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2?" And KID'S NAME said, "Sweet! Yes please!"

So the THING VERB 4ed and magically the kid became ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2. And the funny thing was, the THING wasn't either of those things anymore, because the magic had swapped them to the kid. It was now ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4.

Both the THING and the kid looked in the mirror (did I mention there was a mirror just standing there, oh so handy-like? I didn't? Right. Well it was. How convenient for my story). And they both liked what they saw. The THING was no longer ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2. It was ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4. And the kid was no longer ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4. It was ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2, like the THING used to be.

The kid and the THING shook hands and went their merry ways. To this day, the kid is still ADJECTIVE 1 and ADJECTIVE 2, though he/she's not really a kid anymore, and the THING is still ADJECTIVE 3 and ADJECTIVE 4, even though it's still a THING.

And those kids that used to pick on the kid? Well the THING happened to walk past them after it and the kid parted ways. And it ate them. Because it was a THING, and, well, annoying kids are what THINGs eat. Did I mention that before? I didn't? Well, that's what they eat. And boy, do THINGs find them tasty!

The End.

Some ideas for how to use this story:

- Read the whole story together and share what the student finds. Discuss the parts of speech in the story – this can be a great activity to do with the whole class during literacy time. Then, using block commands (BrailleNote) or find/replace (MS Word, Pages, etc), use the whole word/s to be replaced including the number if present (e.g. VERB 1). Try out different words to see which fit best – get creative!
- Another option is to create a document which simply lists the following:
 - MY NAME:
 - THING:
 - NOUN:
 - NUMBER:
 - KID'S NAME:
 - ADJECTIVE 1:
 - ADJECTIVE 2:
 - ADJECTIVE 3:
 - ADJECTIVE 4:
 - VERB 1:
 - VERB 2:
 - VERB 3:

Without reading the story first, have the student come up with words for each of the items in the list. You may want to tell them that the THING is a made-up creature, so they know to give it a silly and imaginative descriptive name (e.g. Whoosywhatsit). Their classmates can also fill out the same list. Then the student (and their classmates) can use their list/s to populate the story (using block commands or find/replace), trying out different combinations of words to create a story they like. If working in small groups, each child in a small group could contribute two or three of the words to make a group story.

- Another option could be to braille out two copies of the story on paper, with one copy having the capitalised words and the other having a numbered gap for each capitalised word instead (e.g., Once upon a time there was a 1. It was 2 and 3.) The number would correspond to a brailled list:
 - 1. Thing:
 - 2. Adjective 1:
 - 3. Adjective 2:, etc.

The student would first read the story with the capitalised words included, brainstorm about what words to use, and then use their words to fill out the brailled list. They would then refer to the list to fill out the numbered blanks in the second copy of the story. (If there are difficulties with aligning the braille, try cutting out and pasting the words they write in the list into the blank spaces – and leave plenty of space!)

Good luck – and let us know if you come up with other ways to use the story or if you'd like to write your own to share!

BrailleNote Apex

Information provided by Ramona Mandy, Humanware

Below are instructions for using the BrailleNote Apex to:

- read a PDF document
- read a DOCX document
- read a PPTX document (PowerPoint)

Reading a PDF document

Support for PDF documents on the Apex was implemented in KeySoft version 9.2 (and 8.1 for the mPower), released October 2011.

It is now possible to convert a PDF document to a text file. The text file can be opened directly in KeyWord, thus allowing it to be read and edited at your convenience. This capability allows for any PDF document with imbedded text to be converted to a text file, allowing professional documents to be received as attachments by email on your Apex, and opened and read without the use of a computer or other external converter.

Steps to convert a PDF file are as follows:

1. Enter KeyWord from the Main Menu.
2. Choose “Open a document” by pressing O. Select the drive and folder where the PDF file is located.
3. Press Enter on the PDF file. KeySoft prompts with the message “Converting PDF to text” and 3 second beeps while the conversion is in progress.
4. You are now presented with the message to “Review the options?” Simply press Enter if you want to immediately enter the converted text file. Press Y for Yes if you want to immediately save this file as a braille document. Then follow the prompts and press Escape once finishing the questions in the list.
5. If you chose not to convert the file to braille, the PDF file has now been converted to text and is now shown in KeyWord.

PDF files in KeyBook:

If you are planning on reading the contents of a PDF document but do not intend editing the file, KeySoft’s book reader allows for a simple and efficient method to accomplish this task.

Steps to open a PDF file via the book reader:

1. Enter the book reader from KeySoft’s main menu.
2. Select the drive and folder where the PDF file is located.
3. Press enter on the file and it will convert and open the file in the book reader.

Reading a DOCX document

Support for Microsoft Word DOCX files on the Apex was implemented in KeySoft version 9.3.0, released July 2013.

Now DOCX documents saved in Microsoft Word 2007 or later can be opened and read using your BrailleNote Apex. What’s more, unlike other similar portable devices, KeySoft will not strip out the primary formatting of a document, allowing you to understand how the document is laid out and view such formatting as heading styles, tables, footnotes and endnotes, and page alignment changes using both speech and braille. You can either view the document in KeyWeb using familiar

navigation keystrokes or alternatively obtain a simplified version of the DOCX file in KeyWord for editing.

Viewing and editing DOCX files:

1. From either File Manager, Book Reader, or the KeyWord file list, simply press enter on the DOCX file you wish to open.
2. You will be asked if you want to view or edit the document.
3. Press V to view a formatted document in the KeyWeb browser, or press E to edit a simplified document in KeyWord.

Reading a PPTX file

Support for Microsoft PowerPoint PPTX documents on the Apex was implemented in KeySoft version 9.4.0, released December 2013.

KeySoft 9.4.0 puts Microsoft PowerPoint 2007 or later presentations at your fingertips. Simply press Enter on a PowerPoint file and KeySoft will open the slides in a simple, non-visual manner, so you have access to the textual information.

Simply ask the teacher or presenter to provide you the PowerPoint file and you can follow along with your peers. What's more, view the individual slide elements in braille while you explore a slide. Navigate a slide's table, bullets, heading styles, and slide notes with ease without needing to have a screen reader talking in your ear while you are trying to give or follow a presentation.

To open a PowerPoint 2007 or later presentation:

1. From the Main Menu, press F for File Manager.
2. Press B for Browse Files.
3. Space to your desired drive and press Enter.
4. Space to your desired folder and press Enter.
5. Space to the desired presentation ending in .pptx and press Enter.
6. You will hear the Apex say "Please wait" as it converts the file and you will soon find yourself at the top of a page of links containing all your slides. Simply navigate with the next line command and press Enter on the slide you want to view. At the bottom of each slide are Previous, Index, and Next links to allow you to progress through the presentation.

Community Information Forum

The Centre for Eye Research Australia is offering an information forum on diabetic eye disease. Diabetic eye disease is a common complication of diabetes and one of the leading causes of avoidable vision loss.

When: Thursday 17 July 2014

Time: 11.00am to 12.00 noon

Where: Royal Victorian eye and Ear Hospital, Lucy Jones Hall 426 Albert Street, East Melbourne (corner of Morrison Place)

Hosted by: Dr Peter van Wijngaarden, Principal Investigator – Diabetic Retinopathy and Neuroglial Interactions, CERA

RSVP by: 11 July to cera-rsvp@unimelb.edu.au or 1300 737 757

Cost: Free

Tea and coffee available from 10.30am

AusVELS 2014 Curriculum Update for Students with Disabilities

Source: AusVELS website - <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Overview/Home> and DEECD email S189-2014 from Carol Kelly, Executive Director, Student Inclusion and Engagement Division

AusVELS provides a single curriculum for levels Foundation–10. AusVELS incorporates the Australian Curriculum as it is progressively developed within a framework that reflects particular Victorian priorities and approaches to teaching and learning.

The AusVELS website provides the F–10 curriculum for Victorian government and Catholic schools and is available to all independent schools as a model and resource for the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum. For curriculum planning, teaching and assessment resources, curriculum consultation information, and professional learning opportunities, please see: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/index.aspx

- The integration of additional levels within the AusVELS curriculum provides school leaders and teachers with access to curriculum that is inclusive of every learner.
- New to AusVELS in 2014 is the addition of *pre* Foundation Levels A – D in English, History, Mathematics and Science.
- For AusVELS and Towards Foundation Level AusVELS curricula see the AusVELS website available at: <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>
- Advice about how to use the curriculum with students with disabilities is contained in the guidance materials *AusVELS Students with Disabilities Guidelines – March 2014* available at: <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/English/Overview/Diversity-of-learners>

Vision Specific Sites for Online Shopping

From Garry Stinchcombe, Support Skills Co-ordinator

I have visited the following five online shopping sites over the last couple of weeks. Two are Australian and the other four are based in the US:

- The Braille Superstore: www.BrailleSuperstore.com
- Blind Mice Mega Mall: <https://www.blindmicemegamall.com/bmm/shop/Home>
- Blind Treasures – Deals & Steals: www.blindtreasures.com/
- Queensland Blind Association Inc Online Store: www.qbastore.com/
- Vision Australia's Online Shop: www.visionaustralia.org/shop

Please note: As with all online shopping please take time to check them out carefully. The online environment is always changing. You can find products overseas much cheaper but when you add on postage and handling there is often not a lot of difference.

Accessible Cycling

Cycling Victoria and Cycling Australia will be running a 10-week program to engage people with disabilities in cycling. The program will offer coaching and support to all participants. Equipment will be sourced on a needs basis, as per the advice received in the registration form. Further information can be obtained from Ben Rogers, Inclusion Coordinator, Cycling Victoria via email ben.rogers@cycling.org.au or telephone 8480 3000.

When: every Sunday between 9am and 11am starting from 1st June

Where: HA Smith Velodrome in Hawthorn

Snow Skiing Opportunities

Here are two groups which offer skiing for people with vision and/or other impairments:

Disabled Winter Sports

DWA assists individuals with disabilities to participate in winter sports. The organisation's members range from recreational skiers to Australia's Winter Paralympians. From its programs some of the world's finest alpine skiers have emerged, recording victories at the highest level of international competition.

For further information: www.disabledwintersport.com.au/

Victorian Program Coordinator: Tom Mitten

Email tomm@disabledwintersport.com.au; mobile 0487 442 237

Vibe Ski Club

The Ski Club aims to provide the opportunity for blind and vision impaired people to enjoy the Victorian alpine area and to provide community support through club membership. Members and their families are encouraged to connect through events run during the year. Events range from alpine activities such as ski trips and family fun days to social gatherings such as BBQ's and trivia nights. Activities run by the club are open to members and non-members with a focus on enabling additional vision impaired people to enjoy within the alpine environment.

For further information: www.vibeskiclub.org.au/

Email: info@vibeskiclub.org.au

Saturday Swish

From Mel and Liz

Want to try a great game for all ages and abilities?

Want to meet people and have a great time on a Saturday?

Swish is a wonderful game which can be played by all ages, abilities.

When: 12:30pm till 3:30pm every Saturday

Where: 454 Glenferrie Road Kooyong – please ring either Mel or Liz to enter the building from the Red Door or the Talbot Crescent door.

BYO: lunch but chocolate and soft-drink is available for sale

For further information, contact Liz on 0428 061 135 or Mel on 0438 542 274.

Goalball

The current youth program runs through until 21st June, with a second program starting in July.

When: Saturdays from 9:30am to 11:00am

Where: Scotch College.

Who: All prospective players are welcome.

For further information visit the Goalball website: www.goalball.org.au or contact Dan Pritchard on 0422 533 289 or email siren_guy@hotmail.com.

Gymnastics in the East

Blind Sports Victoria is looking at the possibility of establishing a gymnastics program in the eastern suburbs for school aged children with the support of Gymnastics Victoria. If this is something that may be of interest, please register with Blind Sports at info@blindsports.org.au

Audio Games

If you are interested in PC audio games then you might want to check out the link below where you'll find a review of the top 25 audio game sites. While it does have some IOS games, the majority are PC games: www.7128.com/top25/topsitesblind.html

Network for Parents of Vision Impaired Children

Information provided by Sandra George

This is a self-supporting group for families, providing an opportunity to meet, create new networks, share hints and strategies and most of all celebrate the achievements of our beautiful children. It provides a safe and friendly environment where we can share things that our other friends may not understand. We are not a formal organisation and do not have direct links to other groups, but we are very appreciative of the support of Statewide Vision Resource Centre, Vision Australia, Guide Dogs Victoria (and their Child Mobility Services) and Vision Impaired Sports.

The first meeting of this group was held on Sunday 2nd March at the Vision Australia Cricket Ground (behind VA in Glenferrie Rd, Kooyong). After a brief introduction to each family (where we could say as much or as little as we felt comfortable with) 23 mums and dads were free to chat or watch the 19 children and babies (VI and siblings) as they played.

Thanks to Rod and Daniel Pritchard (Cricket) and Michelle Baird (Goalball) who provided equipment to keep the children occupied with fun for all.

If you are interested in joining our network or just being added to the contact list, email sandrageorge47@gmail.com (or phone 0421 058882 and leave a message).

Let us know:

- The area where you live and the age of your child/children
- Whether you are able to meet during the week, at weekends or both

At present we have 28 families from all over Melbourne, the Peninsula and a couple from the country. The first two meetings have been on a Sunday in Melbourne by majority request, but if demand arises there could be other groups, especially in country areas.

Correction to: Visiting Teacher Position in Darwin

Senior Education Advisor position based in Darwin. Available in the Northern Territory in **2015**. Please contact inge.carter@nt.gov.au for more information.

National Braille Music Camp

All the best to the group of 10 Victorians who will be joining National Braille Music Camp in Mittagong this week!!! We wish Jordie, Myriam and the students a wonderful and safe adventure – and we look forward to hearing the music and the stories next term!

Google's Driverless Car!

Source: www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/may/28/google-reveals-driverless-car-prototype

Google has demonstrated its own driverless car, a design that does away with all conventional controls including the steering wheel, and says it will build 100 of the vehicles for testing with the eventual aim of "bringing this technology to the world safely".

The company had for several years been testing everyday cars equipped with sensors, navigation equipment and computers to drive themselves but in the meantime it has secretly developed a prototype from scratch that will have no facility for a human to take control, other than an emergency stop button.

The toy-like concept vehicle has two seats, a screen displaying the route and a top speed of 25mph (40km/h). An array of sensors allows the vehicle's computer to determine its location and surroundings and it can "see" several hundred metres, according to Google.

The link above has a video featuring the driverless car!

Holiday Activity: Figatroll (Opera for Children)

When: 30 June to 5 July

Times: 11am and 3pm daily

Where: Upstairs at The Athenaeum, 188 Collins St Melbourne

Tickets: \$20 or \$60 for family of 4

Further information:

www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/Whatson/ArtsandCulture/Opera/Pages/771a46b3-fdcc-4494-b0b8-525f593176ca.aspx

Queen's Birthday Honours in the VI Community

- **Maryanne Diamond** was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to people who are blind or have low vision through national and international leadership roles, and as an advocate for best practice employment opportunities.
- **Greg Leigh** was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to the deaf and hard of hearing community, particularly children, through education, research, public policy development, and specialist services.
We note that his work through RIDBC also provides significant support to students with vision impairments.
- **Gertrude (Trudy) Westh** was honoured with a medal of the Order of Australia for her decades of support to Victorians who are blind or have low vision through her involvement with auxiliaries of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Jordie Howell, Alicia san Martin, Mike Steer, Garry Stinchcombe and Emily White.

If you would like to contribute to The Bulletin please email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

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