

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 19

Friday 21st November 2014

**Hope to see you at the SPEVI Conference in Melbourne
Monday 12th to Thursday 15th January 2015**

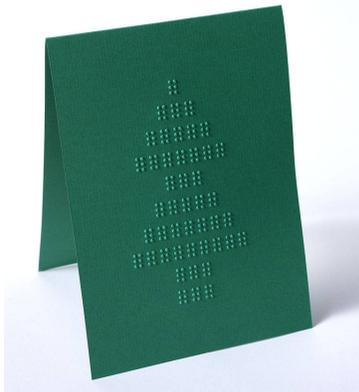
Professional Development Activities for Term 4, 2014

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: Maths and Tactual Graphicacy – Emily White 12:15-1:20: Whole number skills, including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and long division 1:40-2:30: Transformations and 3D to 2D representations | Tues 25 November |
| SVRC Xmas Morning Tea – all invited – please RSVP | Wed 3 December |
| If you'd like to suggest a Skill Power Workshop or book a session with any of the staff here in term 4, please email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au | Make a suggestion! |

SVRC Xmas Morning Tea – the highlight of every year!



The SVRC Xmas Morning Tea is always a blast – and it's a way for us to thank you for your work and support during the year.

Please come! Please invite staff from schools, families and anyone else who needs thanking for supporting students with vision impairments in Victorian schools and beyond!

And you won't find Tim Tams at this morning tea! Food is lovingly prepared by the hard-working staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

RSVP so we know how many cakes to bake... svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

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SPEVI Conference Dinner Theme: Masquerade!

Source: Conference organising committee

This will be a night not to be missed! Dress up in your finest masquerade and enjoy delicious food and wine and the company of your fellow delegates set in the Victorian Art Centre's most premier event space. With its magnificent domed ceiling finished in gold leaf and floor to ceiling glass leading to a private balcony and spectacular views of the city skyline, the ANZ Pavilion is the perfect setting to relax over dinner.

Date: Tuesday 13 January 2015

Time: 7.00pm to 11.00pm

Where: ANZ Pavilion, Arts Centre Melbourne

Dress: Cocktail – Masks a must!

Cost: Inclusive for full registrations or \$145.00 for day registrations and additional guests

*The Arts Centre Melbourne is located 1.4km from the Melbourne Convention & Training Centre and is approximately a 20 minute walk or 8 minutes in a taxi

SPEVI Conference: Special Invitation to Parents

Source: Conference organising committee

Great opportunity for parents to:

- Learn and share knowledge
- Attend workshops with other parents
- Hear the latest from Australia and beyond

Why should you attend?

Parent workshops will run concurrently with the SPEVI conference accessing keynote speakers, experts and other parents in small groups. Some of the things you may find interesting include:

- Four fantastic keynote speakers
- The parenting experience (from the parent perspective)
- Sensory and active learning, art, technology, literacy, maths and braille for our children
- Physical activity, gardening and independence through orientation and mobility
- Social skills, confidence, inclusion and transitions (home / kinder / school / work).
- Better Start, NDIS, Video conferencing

There are sessions of interest to parents on all four days, however for those unable to attend the whole conference, Tuesday and Wednesday have a greater parent focus.

Better Start and NDIS: We have confirmed that parents will be able to claim the cost of the attendance on the days of the parent workshops (13th and 14th Jan) through 'Better Start'. NDIS has approved funding for attendance at relevant conferences for those with NDIS packages. Parents in the NDIS trial sites are encouraged to discuss this with their 'planner'.

Read more about the keynote speakers, the program and access the registration brochure:

www.spevi.net/spevi/spevi-conference-2015.php

BorrowBox – At your Library

BorrowBox allows you to download and listen to audiobooks with BorrowBox Library app. Download the app – Select your Public Library and enter your ID and password – Borrow, download and play all within the one app!

I Spy with my Bionic Eye, a book written by Dr Dianne Ashworth

Article by Dianne Ashworth reprinted from BCA News, November 2014

I am very pleased and proud to present my book, *I Spy with my Bionic Eye*. My story begins on 22nd May 2012 when I was waiting for surgery as first research participant in the Australian prototype bionic eye trials. Being first meant no one really knew what to expect. Of course with all the pre-clinical work that had been done before my surgery, everyone hoped all would go to plan. And it did!



This book is an adaptation of my journal, as I share eighteen months of my participation in the research. It includes switch on, a term used to describe the first time the device is switched on, drawings of what I saw when the device is activated and how testing in our weekly psychophysics sessions unfolded, as well as using the camera to see and moving about using a semi-portable unit.

As such, this book provides insight into the brilliance of Aussie science! But it is oh so much more. In it, I open my life up to share with the reader, too. Being diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in my mid-twenties was certainly one defining moment, one that changed its course. After my husband deserted me, I raised my two sons as a single mum, studied, volunteered and worked. During the middle of my participation in the bionic eye trials, I even completed a PhD. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, so far *I Spy with my Bionic Eye* is available online from Dorrance (the publisher), Amazon, Google Books, Angus and Robertson, Booktopia and more in paperback and as an e-book. If you do get to read it, I hope you enjoy. Dr Dianne Ashworth.

UEB Online

Information provided by Frances Gentle via SPEVI List

I am not sure if you are aware that RIDBC Renwick Centre is providing a free online UEB training program for sighted learners. The program is entitled UEB Online and the website is <http://uebonline.org>. During the month of October for example, we had 5900 visits to the UEB Online website by just over 1770 users, and 38,000 page views across the website.

UEB Online is an ideal program for professionals, parents and community members who wish to learn braille. It may be used by classroom teachers as a project for their students, or by specialist and mainstream educators and support staff who wish to obtain a qualification in braille. The program consists of 30 lessons that are sub-divided into two modules. The program may be accessed using a Mac or PC computer and any web browser (eg Safari, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome). The program is not available via a tablet, (eg iPad). Lessons are completed with a standard computer keyboard using a number of keys to replicate the keys of a braillewriter. Marking is fully automated so that learners receive immediate feedback as they progress through each lesson. There are a number of lesson support videos under “video resources” in the “resources” section of the course. The videos are also available via YouTube.

For those wishing a Certificate of Completion, RIDBC Renwick Centre offers certificates for each of the two modules, with a processing fee of AUD\$50.

iSeek Day

Report from Deb Davidson, Visiting Teacher, SWVR

On Thursday 13 November, SWVR visiting teachers (vision) hosted an end of year celebration day with students from across the metropolitan and Geelong region.

Students enjoyed connecting with old friends and making new friends while learning new skills.

Amanda, 9 years old, had this to say as part of her written and verbal report to her classmates:

Iseek day is when blind children come and learn every day activities. We always start the day sitting around a big table and say our names and our school, so blind people know who's there. We did craft and made masks and then made chocolate crackles. When we did movement we made human obstacles. Later we made instruments with seeds and bottles. Special visitors that helped us all year came for lunch. We also played swish. It's a game for blind people, but you can play if you are not blind. I enjoyed everything about the day. It was all good.

As part of the lunchtime entertainment, students used their musical instruments to play percussion rhythms based on their favourite foods. Chocolate mud cake and pizza were common rhythms!

The SWV visiting teacher team send out a big shout of appreciation to Marnie, Laura and Simon from Guide Dogs Victoria who supported the day, and ran a terrific movement and body awareness session.

Thanks also goes to ESS staff, Hilary and Domenica for their generous assistance throughout the day.

PD in the West

In an exciting new development in Professional Development offered by the SVRC, participants from South-Western Victorian Region will be able to participate in the 'Educational support for blind students' or 'Educational support for students with low vision' from Footscray.

Vision VTs from SWVR will conduct the activity-based sessions at that site with guest speakers available via the Video Conference unit.

Braille Day: Monday 9 February 2015

Low Vision Day: Monday 23rd February 2015

This PD, offered locally, will be free to teachers and ES staff.

Contact Gabby Graf or Jane Jensen for further information.



Tactile Games!

Our term 4 Dot Power Day featured fun and games – and gave us the opportunity to play with Claire Garrett of Clairbear Creations’ beautiful wooden tactile games. Claire came along to give the kids AND their parents a chance to have a play.

The photo (right) shows examples of board games which can be used for a variety of games such as noughts and crosses, Sudoku and so on. The boards can be joined together to make larger boards for added complexity.



See: <http://clairebearcreations.com.au/>

The Other Film Festival

The programme for the other film festival has just been released. This is an alternative film festival where people with disabilities are central to the festival both as participants and contributors. From the Other Film Festival Website:

More than just screening great films, the festival will introduce you to leading thinkers working at the cutting edge of human enhancement, virtual interaction and emerging access technologies. You will hear from the blind man who has made a career of reviewing movies, learn what film has to teach mental health professionals and be part of bringing a classic horror film back to life.

To make sure that everyone can be part of the action, the festival aims to meet the access requirements of all patrons. All speeches are Auslan interpreted, all films are captioned, all films are audio described and our new home at the Melbourne Brain Centre in Royal Parade is fully accessible.

Inclusive, accessible and exciting, the festival will take you right to the edge of the possible. The Other Film Festival really is the big party where everyone gets invited!

One of the films on offer at the Other Film Festival includes “The Blind Film Critic” which screens at 3.00pm Sunday 7th December. Here is a little about it:

“The words *blind since birth* and *serious film critic* had never been used in the same sentence until Tommy Edison burst onto the US film scene three years ago. Equipped with candour and cut-through humour, Tommy immediately attracted the endorsement of Roger Ebert, the doyen of American film critics.”

Of his reviews, Tommy says “I watch movies and pay attention to them in a different way than sighted people do. I’m not distracted by all the beautiful shots and attractive people. I watch a movie for the writing and acting.”

What: The Other Film Festival

Where: Melbourne Brain Centre, Kenneth Myer Building. 30 Royal Parade, Parkville

When: 3rd - 7th December 2014

Cost: Single Session Pass \$12 Concession and Arts Access Victoria Members \$8

Bookings: By Phone: 0420 581 289

Requests by email: OFFticketing@gmail.com

Talking Map: Perkins School for the Blind

Source: www.engadget.com/2014/11/21/talking-map-perkins/



The Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts just got a high-tech installation to help keep their students from getting lost around campus: a three-dimensional map that talks. Its miniature Monopoly-like buildings and other elements (which were 3D printed, by the way) are coated in conductive paint, so they can recognize when they're being touched. If someone does, the map will announce the building's or any other structure's name along with directions on how to get there. Some areas feature sound effects, as well – a fountain gurgles, for instance, while a bell tower rings. Plus, it has a three-button menu that one can use to browse a spoken list of locations.

This interactive map was created by a team from the University at Buffalo and a company called Touch Graphics Inc., which is also developing a number of other projects for the visually impaired. These include a tactile [map of the US](#) and a [periodic table of elements](#) that both work with a talking pen. According to Touch Graphics Inc. President Steve Landau, "The touch-responsive models solve the 'last mile' problem for blind pedestrians, who can often navigate to a building or campus address using GPS, but then need help to get to the classroom building or doctor's office where they need to be."

Aside from this interactive 3D map, there are many other technologies currently in development to make blind people become more independent. San Francisco's International airport uses a [Bluetooth beacon system](#), for instance, to tell passengers where they're going through their phones. Microsoft, on the other hand, is working on a [bone-conducting headset](#) that gives users turn-by-turn directions.

Pugglespieces: Braille Gifts

Pugglespieces is marketing t-shirts, jewellery and chocolate moulds with raised braille messages. Visit: www.pugglespieces.com.au

VA: Employment Opportunity

Vision Australia is seeking expressions of interest from recent school leavers over 18 years who are keen to complete a traineeship/internship in Business Administration, commencing early 2015. Located in Melbourne the position is available through the Vision Australia Disability Employment Service in partnership with the employer, and offers an entry into a career in the insurance and finance industry. The successful applicant will be supported by Vision Australia throughout the internship.

If you would like to find out more about the Disability Employment Service, and more details on the traineeship position, please contact Greg Brown on 8378 1217 or George Campbell on 8378 1219 at Vision Australia DES.

SPEVI Bear's Long Weekend with Gabby!

SPEVI Bear has been so excited about the upcoming SPEVI Conference! He's keen to spend time in Victoria and see the sights, meet the locals and generally get in the mood for January 12 to 15!

SPEVI Bear was invited to stay with Gabby Graf over the long weekend and enjoyed some fabulous outings with Gabby and her family. He made a swan friend at Sorrento, on a little jetty. The swan was most interested and hung around for some time sniffing and peeking at this most interesting bear.



SPEVI Bear also kicked back and enjoyed the vast landscape view from the SWVR office in Footscray, with the city captured in the background (Ed: and what a fabulous view it is!!!). He then had fun down at the Maribyrnong River parklands, even jumping into the swings for a lazy afternoon of fun in the sun!



If you'd like to invite SPEVI Bear to visit you, please contact the SVRC.

Simple Ideas for Kenya Blind Schools

Rory Fraser, who will visit Kenya later this year, is looking for cheap/free and simple/basic low tech ideas for supporting the education of Kenyan students with vision impairments. He has asked that you write up, draw up or photograph your thoughts so he can compile them to assist teachers in blind schools there. Examples are:

- wire boards for tactile diagrams (relatively cheap and easy to make)
- adapted Swish that can be played with a bell ball on the ground (as played in Kiribati)

Please send your ideas to Rory: fraser.rory.r@edumail.vic.gov.au

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Michael Donnelly.

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

To read The Bulletin online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>