

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 9

Friday 12th June 2015

Professional Development for 2015

Download fliers for the SVRC PD programs: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/PL.shtml; and for an overview of SVRC activities this year visit: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar_2015.doc

Event	Date
Skill Power 9.30 Braille Music – Lea Nagel, SVRC 11.30 Make a suggestion! 1.30 NVDA introduction – Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 15 July
Skill Power 9.30 O&M: Excursion & new environments – Guide Dogs Victoria 11.30 Pearl camera & OpenBook – Trevor Boyd, Quantum 1.30 iPad with Mountbatten – Trevor Boyd, Quantum	Wednesday 29 July
Skill Power 9.30 Audacity + JAWS – Lea Nagel, SVRC *** NEW 11.30 iPad solutions! SonyQX10, Camera Apps followed by Q&A for VTS – Lyn Robinson, SVRC 1.30 QuickTac+Duxbury+Embossing to tactual images – Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 12 August
Skill Power 9.30 O&M: Skill development – ages & stages – Guide Dogs Victoria 11.30 MU Readit Air, Readit Scholar & Prodigy – Tony Wu, Humanware 1.30 (by request)	Wednesday 26 August

SVRC Competition 2015

In the spirit of our information-sharing philosophy this year's SVRC Competition is designed to gather information that we can share with others. The challenge is to write up something interesting that you think other readers of The Bulletin need to know in relation to technology or "work arounds" for students with vision impairments.

What: A paragraph or set of instructions or cheat sheet or nifty and imaginative use of technology

When: Must be received by the end of term 3 (18th September 2015)

Who can participate: Victorian primary- and secondary-aged students with vision impairments

Format: Print or braille or electronic or audio

Prizes: The best entry overall will receive a copy of KNFB Reader Mobile for i-Device or Android. Runners-up will receive one of a number of audio books, donated by Bolinda.

Submit: Please send your best entries to SVRC Competition – PO Box 201 Nunawading 3131 or svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au. Please include your name, year level, school and VT.

Inside This Issue

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Mittagundi: Opportunity for Two Students with VI

Two students with vision impairments are being offered a fantastic opportunity for later in the year.

From the website: Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre is an independent non-profit organisation established with the belief that young people, mountains, purposeful work and challenges are natural partners. The main purpose of Mittagundi is to provide programs for young people (14 to 17) to explore Victoria's high country and themselves.

The beautiful 400acre pioneer-style farm is located near the old gold mining town of Glen Valley, on the Upper Mitta Mitta River, north of Omeo, VIC (approximately 6 hours from Melbourne). You will be challenged to experience life without modern gadgets, makeup, time or electricity. Instead you will be invited to contribute to daily life on the farm and challenge yourself through new experiences with the natural world and others.

The atmosphere at Mittagundi is simple, honest and happy. There are no watches, no timetables and no money. Instead there is an opportunity for you to live and work together with other young people in an environment where people matter more than anything else.

Who: 14 to 17 years old interested in the outdoors

When: 10 days to spare from 13 to 22 November 2015

Where: Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre www.mittagundi.org.au/10-day-programs/. Program begins and ends at Albury train station.

Cost: \$440 (neg)

Register your interest with Claire Peck: info@mittagundi.org.au

More information including a video: www.mittagundi.org.au

If there is lots of interest, students may be invited to join one of the programs next year OR Mittagundi may consider a dedicated program for students with vision impairments towards the end of 2016!!!

Please pass this info on to your friends, families and colleagues.

Wayfinding: Future Technology

Microsoft, in collaboration with Guide Dogs UK and Future Cities Catapult are currently working on 3-D Soundscape Technology which will assist people with vision impairments to navigate the urban environment. This technology consists of a location that has wifi and bluetooth powered sensors in the physical environment that will communicate with a blind person and give them verbal cues so they know where they are and what they are approaching.

There are three components to this technology:

1. A smartphone that will listen to external and internal sensors around the person.
2. A pair of bone conducting headphones that sends sounds and verbal cues directly to their inner ear, leaving their ears free for environmental noise. These headphones rest against the sides of their head.
3. "A boosted" route: a route that has a lot of sensors in the physical environment.

To see "Independence Day", a video summarising this technology, visit:

<https://youtu.be/BEzncMLLOxE>.

Teaching VoiceOver on the iPad

Source: Adapted Innovation by Julie Johnson <https://adaptedinnovation.wordpress.com/>

Navigating the iPad via VoiceOver requires the new user to think about the cursor in a new way. In screen readers such as JAWS and NVDA, there is a visual cursor that the screen reader can follow and read back auditorily. However, in VoiceOver, the cursor is entirely auditory; it scans visual content on the iPad and reads back to the blind or low vision user.

Here are a few tips to setting up the iPad before introducing VoiceOver to a new user:

1. Before introducing VoiceOver, organize the apps the student uses the most on to the first page of the home screen.
2. Set the VoiceOver speaking rate to a speed the consumer can handle. Slower is better in the beginning just like any screen reading software or product feature.
3. Explain to student that they need to rely both on memory and auditory feedback from VoiceOver to navigate the iPad. Knowing the location of the apps on the screen can assist the user.
4. As you introduce the five gestures that the student is going to need to learn to effectively use VoiceOver, student and teacher work side-by-side with their own iPad. This gives the student an auditory model and a chance to do some problem-solving and for the teacher to offer auditory/tactual modelling.

The gestures themselves will take a bit of practice. Try using VoiceOver practice in Settings: Settings > General > Accessibility > VoiceOver > VoiceOver Practice
This option does not appear until you turn VoiceOver.

Also, check the new “Cheat Sheet” – VoiceOver Gestures for Navigation and Reading by Lyn Robinson: svrc.vic.edu.au/CSvoice_over.pdf

Next Generation Banknotes and the CashTest Card

Source: Blind Citizens News, June 2015 and BCA Parent News, May 2015

In September 2012 the Reserve Bank announced plans to upgrade the security of Australia’s current banknote series. The Bank announced in February 2015 that the next generation of banknotes will include a tactile feature to assist the vision impaired community to denominate their banknotes.

The tactile feature will be in addition to the existing features present on the current series – bright colours, large and bold numerals and size differentials. The Bank will also continue to fund the production of Blind Citizens Australia’s CashTest cards. CashTest cards, developed and distributed by BCA, assist people who are blind to distinguish one Australian bank note from another. It is a wallet sized card made of plastic with braille numbering down the side.

To use the card, you place an Australian banknote in the centre fold and fold it over to the front of the cash test card. Hold the banknote firmly in place by gripping the banknote through the thumb hole at the back of the card.

The note will reach a line of raised dots on the front of the cash test card. The top line of raised dots marks the placement of the edge of the five-dollar note. The second line of raised dots marks the placement of the edge of the ten-dollar note and so forth.

CashTest cards are available from BCA by calling 1800 033660.

One Place for Special Needs: Complete Guide to Educational and Special Needs Apps

By Lyn Robinson

Dawn Villarreal is a parent of a child with special needs and has developed a website called One Place for Special Needs. As the name suggests there are lots of interesting resources here for children with additional educational needs. I was very impressed with the section on Special Needs Apps. Categories include apps for children with autism, apraxia and sensory impairments. There are sections related to Visual Skills development including these from the website:

- **Visual memory apps**
These games will help your child remember what she's seen. Many are in the standard memory matching game style while others are more complex.
- **Visual motor skills apps**
- **Visual processing apps**
Visual processing refers to our ability to recognize and interpret the information we see. Many visual processing skills are integral to reading. Here you'll find all the visual processing game apps including optical illusions and apps that work on eye teaming issues.
- **Visual spatial apps**
Visual spatial skills is the ability to turn and rotate objects in our mind. These games are specific to that skill set.
- **Visual scanning apps**
Visual scanning is our ability to scan a room, for instance, and find an object. These games work on scanning an area while playing.
- **Visual tracking apps**
Visual tracking is an important skill for reading left to right and darting our eyes to various words on a page. These apps work on our visual tracking and scanning skills.

Also worth checking out is the “Assistive Technology apps” category which has many apps useful for students with vision impairments including apps which use voice recognition and text to speech.

The “Complete guide to educational and special needs apps” can be found at:

www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com/main/library_special_needs_apps.html

Winter Sports

Winter has arrived!!! Families might be considering a trip to the snow. Snow Boarding and Skiing whether it be downhill or cross country is very popular among people who are blind or have low vision. Contact: Disabled WinterSport Australia

Ross House, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Vic 3000

Victorian Program Coordinator: Tom Ridley: 0423 087 712 or vic@disabledwintersport.com.au

The Albinism Fellowship of Australia Biennial Conference

When: 25th to 27th September 2015

Where: Hilton Cairns, 34 Esplanade, Cairns QLD 4870

This is a family friendly program and Youth and creche programs will be available.

Download an information pack here:

<http://albinismaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2.-PDFCONFERENCE-INFORMATION-AND-REGISTRATION-PACK-2015.pdf>

Email conference@albinismaustralia.org for more details.

Portable Display for BrailleNote Apex

From Ramona Mandy, Humanware

A new, light-weight, easy-to-set-up monitor has now emerged which will overcome difficulties faced by some in finding a portable visual display option for BrailleNote Apex users. This will be particularly attractive to sighted support staff working with students who use a BrailleNote Apex in a high school setting where portability and ease of use is desirable for visual access to the student's work. It addresses the problems sometimes faced in getting a BrailleNote connected to a school network via wi fi for using an iPad as a visual display, and some laptops not being able to install Keyview.

The product is called a GeChic 1302 portable monitor. It is a 13.3 inch slim line LCD monitor. It connects to the BN Apex via a VGA cable and plugs into the BN USB port to get power. It is not much bigger or heavier than an iPad and comes with a set of plastic brackets in which to stand it up.

It costs approximately USD\$179 plus shipping. One place from which you can buy it is:

www.icitouchtech.com

2015 Let's Get Physical Sports and Recreation Program News

Rod Pritchard (Victorian Blind Cricket Association) and Darren Moyle (Guide Dogs Victoria) recently sent a copy of their newsletter which describes the terrific times they have been having this term. Spirited games of T-Ball have been played, athletics and cycling have been enjoyed. Below is a segment of the newsletter:

“For the final day for term 2, May 31st we shifted gear taking to the bike paths. Leaving Kooyong mums, dads, boys, girls, brothers and sisters all mounted their charges and followed the bike path towards the city. Seeking refuge at one point for a short time under the MacRobertson Bridge to avoid being caught in a heavy shower, the convoy proceeded onto the Botanical Gardens where they took time out for a rest, hot chocolates, coffees and the like avoiding a heavy down pour and waiting for the weather to clear up before continuing on their way. Back on the bikes and after returning to Kooyong it was time to fire up the BBQ and enjoy a well earned lunch. Again, the day would not have been possible without the support of organizations providing the necessary equipment and this time it was thanks to Blind Sports Victoria and Guide Dogs Victoria for kindly providing the tandem bikes that helped make the day such a success.

Now it's time for a break until we are back again for the term 3 program when we take on goalball, basketball, swish, indoor bowls and bocce before the term finale when we try our hand (or is that our feet?) at ice skating.”

Let's Get Physical will recommence on 9th August.

For more information please contact Rod on 0401 718 926 or Darren on 0406 384 357.

Represent Victoria in Goalball!

School Sport Victoria is very pleased to announce that it will be sending representative teams to the 2015 Pacific School Games in Adelaide. Competition will be for vision impaired students aged 16 years and under in a mixed event.

This is an ideal pathway for higher representative opportunities. For further information visit:

<https://goalball.eventdesq.com/> or contact Leesa Langley on (03) 9488 9485 or langley.leesa.m@edumail.vic.gov.au

New Education App Gives Parents a SchoolMate

Source: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/news/archive/Pages/schoolmate.aspx>, 22 May 2015

A new app developed specially for Victorian parents will provide a window into their child's learning. SchoolMate provides parents with an overview of what their child is learning at school, and suggests ways for parents to get involved in their child's education. SchoolMate is the first Australian app that connects the curriculum to a child's development.

SchoolMate will:

- Show parents what their children are learning in school in each subject in every year from Prep to Year 10 according to the Victorian AusVELS curriculum;
- Provide advice to parents about what they can do at home to help their child learn;
- Provide ideas for books and apps which parents can download, borrow or buy which are related to their child's school work.

Developed by the Department, SchoolMate works on iPhone, iPad and Android phones and tablets and is available for free download in the App Store and Google Play.

SchoolMate was developed after research by the Department found that parents wanted to know more about what their children were learning at school and what they could do at home to help. Victorian teaching subject associations including the History Teachers Association of Victoria and the Maths Teachers Association of Victoria provided information for SchoolMate, as did teachers and principals from schools across the state.

News

We have heaps of news from VTs and schools this fortnight (see below) – thanks to the VTs for their news!!!

- **Lee Clarke's** new student **Tylah** has recently moved from New Zealand and enrolled in his local government school. Tylah is settling in well as you can see from the articles below, kindly shared by Lee! Tylah uses a BrailleNote, funded through the Department of Education and Training, and will be allocated additional equipment as required through the SVRC Equipment Loans Program.
- The VTs from South-Western Victoria Region recently held iSeek Day in Geelong, with metro students travelling from Footscray to Geelong in a V/Line train. Below is **Deb Davidson's** report.
- Well done to **Nathan** who is in Support Skills' Group D. Nathan won the Paul Carlson Young Player Award for the 2014-15 seasons. Nathan also represented Victoria in the recent All Abilities national tournament which was run as part of the Cricket World Cup. **Josh, Zac** and **Daniel** also were in this team and are past Support Skills students. For more information check out the Victorian Blind Cricket website at: www.vbca.org.au
- We congratulate **Andrew Chang** and **Glen Morrow** on their recent appointments to positions at the SVRC.
- **Annette Godfrey-Magee's** 35 year of service to DET was recently celebrated at a Recognition of Service to Victorian Education ceremony. Read more about Annette on eduGate: <https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/newsevents/featstories/Pages/Recognition-of-Service-to-Victorian-Education-Ceremony-Honours-Annette-Godfrey-Magee.aspx>

Introducing Tylah



Hello, my name is Tylah-Fred. I have an eye condition called Leber's Congenital Amaurosis. It is a type of pinhole vision, which helps me to see kind of in the middle. I have equipment especially for the blind and low visioned people. I am loving my new Primary School and I have experienced a lot from the new school I have been placed in.

I have enjoyed explaining to the children what it's like being blind and have had an equally fun time with the kids of my school.



Thank you all and I loved having to explain a little about ME!



Braille Lessons with Lee!

We had the pleasure of having Lee Clarke from Department of Education Visiting Teacher Service for the Vision Impaired to conduct a braille session with the students from Grade 3/4. They

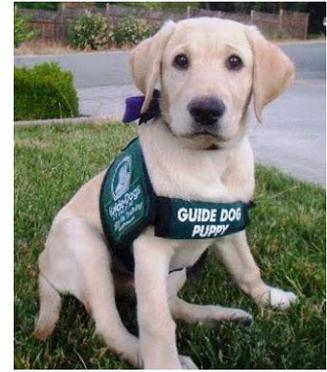
had a chance to experience reading and writing in braille. The lesson was very in depth and informative for both students and teachers to understand the process of using braille in an

educational way. Students learnt the letters of the ^{alphabet} and then had to write a note to a friend using braille letters. Once students had completed this task, they then had an opportunity to ice and decorate biscuits using M&M's to represent the initials of both their first and last name. All the students had a fantastic time whilst being introduced to braille.



Guide Dogs Victoria

Students in Tylah's Grade 3/4 had an opportunity to participate in a workshop presented by Guide Dogs Victoria. Students had a fantastic time learning aspects of what it might be like to have vision impairments or to be blind. Activities consisted of tactile objects to play naughts and crosses, building and placing wooden items on a small board, finding objects using directions from a partner and drawing a bird's eye view of our classroom. The Grade 3/4 also had an opportunity to navigate through the school using a cane or sighted guide, which is voice and holding onto a partner to help you navigate. All the students found it interesting and are now looking forward in helping others who have vision impairments or who are blind.



Thien Wins a Pie on Pi (II) Day of the Century

From Deb Davidson, Visiting Teacher, SWVR

Thien (photo right), a year 7 student at Sunshine College North Campus, was awarded a medal on Pi Day of the Century for reciting an amazing 56 digits of the number Pi.



Pi Day is celebrated every year on 14th March. This year, the first five digits of the famous irrational number Pi, were the same as the date – 3.1415926535... (when the date is written with the month first), hence the name, 'Pi Day of the Century'.

Students able to recite more than 20 digits were also rewarded with a pie!

iSeek Geelong

From Deb Davidson, Visiting Teacher, SWVR

On an icy cold June morning, SWV metro students travelled by V/Line train to Geelong to spend the day with their Geelong counterparts.

A highlight of the day was being picked up by a McHarry's bus and taken for a ride to the waterfront where students worked in pairs to explore the bus and discover a myriad of facts about buses and safe bus travel. Everything that could be counted on the bus was carefully discussed and documented. Bus driver, Garry, patiently answered questions and provided tips and information to students about safe travel.

Garry kindly dropped the group back at Westfield and hungry students enthusiastically researched the foodcourt options and, supporting each other, independently purchased lunch and drinks.

Following lunch, students worked in teams on some mobility challenges. Several teams explored inside the shopping centre, while another team braved the outdoors for a special street challenge. Students in the street challenge discovered the difficulty of finding an address that didn't appear on their iPhone GPS! But their efforts and determination to locate a particular café were greatly rewarded, as can be seen by the photo below of Josh between a couple of local celebrities. Can you guess who they are?

SWV Region Visiting Teachers extend a big thank you to Laura and Simon from GDV Children's Mobility Service for the fantastic support and assistance on the day. And a special thanks also goes out to McHarry's Buslines for generously providing a bus and driver to support the stationary bus exploration.

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Andrew Chang, Sandy George, Garry Stinchcombe and Emily White.

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

To read The Bulletin online visit: www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml

