



AMESVIEW

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The AMESVI board members for the 2006-2007 year are:

President: Nancy Muldrew
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Greater Boston: Jill Robbins
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Northeast: Carol Pierce
cnpierce1@comcast.net

South Shore/Cape: Jean Shea
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February 2007

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

It is my pleasure to serve on the AMESVI board. I realize the complexity of the issues that face the professionals teaching children with visual impairments. The contributions made by so many in the field make me proud to be a part of this profession. As we look to the future, the tasks of providing high quality education and independent living skills for so many can be overwhelming. The more we connect as professionals, the better we become in achieving this challenging goal. Every conference we attend, email we reply to and class we take, helps others in our field as we share our new ideas and years of experience. The level of collaboration that our membership exhibits makes our organization an important one. Even when ideas and philosophies differ, the exchange always seems to bring a new light to making an impact with students and connecting with parents. I am truly grateful for the professionals in the field that better the lives of those with so much potential and a slightly different way of learning. Thanks to all of you who do what you do with vigor, enthusiasm and passion. Thanks for your commitment, your resilience, your fortitude and your relentless efforts. Truly, you do make a difference. Keep the efforts going and the ideas flowing; the profession will continue to improve.

Nancy Muldrew

President

BOARD POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The following Board positions will become available beginning in July 2007.



President Elect: Will assist the President, as requested, perform all duties of the president in the president's absence, and oversee the publication of the newsletter. After serving in this office for one year, the President-elect shall become President, then President Ex-Officio. (Three year commitment)

Recording Secretary: Will keep accurate written minutes of all meetings of the Executive Board and of the general membership, and will maintain all reports and records of the Association. (Two year commitment)

Regional Reps: Will promote communication among the members within geographical regions of the state and represent their concerns to the Executive Board: Regional positions will be open in Boston, South Shore and Western Mass. (Two year commitment)

Treasurer: Maintains the financial records of the Association. (Two year commitment)

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact **Meg Robertson**. She can be reached by phone at work: 617-626-7581 or home: 978-664-0278, or by email Mobilitymeg@aol.com.

REGIONAL UPDATES

South Shore/Cape Region

The South Shore/Cape group met at the home of **Lynn Rowe** on November 14th. **Tom Miller** and **Ann Barber** joined us to share information on the **10-Step Guide** and the new "Welcoming Students with Visual Impairment into Your School" module. Ann outlined the various areas that the new **10-Step Guide** will cover. We learned about the people involved in the preparation of the guide. It is now in its last edits. Tom planned to meet with DOE on December 12th in order to get it

published. The guide will eventually be on the DOE website.

Tom showed one of the modules to the group. We were all very impressed and excited to be able to use this tool in presenting inservices and workshops in the schools where we work. Tom will contact the AMESVI board when the modules are ready for distribution. They are being sent to state consultants in every state.

After the informational session, we enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner along with great conversation and a lot of laughs.

The next South Shore/Cape get-together will be held in the Spring with a "surprise" guest speaker. Look for more information relative to this on the listserv in the Spring.

The AMESVI members on the Cape have been holding meetings as well, since they are able to get together on Cape more easily than traveling north to our meetings. They have been active and productive.

The following is **Mara Evans'** Cape area update:

Our group continues to meet and plan various activities. This past Fall we helped organize a training on Vision Therapy. This was a well attended event on the Cape with almost 30 participants. AMESVI partnered with the Perkins Educational Partnerships and the Training Center at Perkins to provide this training.

A Technology Fair was held at Barnstable High School with Adaptive Technologies. They exhibited a wide range of technologies for students with visual impairments. The products presented aid students from a wide range of ages. This event was attended primarily by families and students. The numbers were lower than we had anticipated, but it was very worthwhile for those who attended. Many thanks to Gayle and her staff!

At our most recent gathering **Tom Miller**, director of the Educational

Partnerships program at Perkins, presented the draft of the **10-Step Guide**. This publication was developed by a group of professionals in the TVI, O&M, and Rehabilitation Teaching fields. It is to be disseminated to Directors of Special Education throughout the state highlighting appropriate service delivery to students with visual impairments. Final version date has not yet been determined from the Department of Education, but we are anxiously awaiting its arrival! Tom also shared highlights from a new publication coming from Perkins – Welcoming Students with Visual Impairments to your classroom. This is a wonderful tool for TVI's to use as training modules with teachers, peers, and administrators. The publication is due out very soon according to Tom. **Carrie Braisier** of the Vision Resources Library also joined our group to update us on new materials available and share some "extras" with us. Thank you Carrie for what seems to be an annual visit with our group!

We will continue to meet, share resources, and support each other in the coming months. Congratulations to **Krissy Breda** on the birth of her son James on Sept. 1, 2006!!!!

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Shea

NORTHEAST REGION

Those members of the **Northeast Region Group** who did not have time to respond to the questionnaire before the holidays are still welcome to do so. Your input is essential to planning a program that meets your needs for the start of 2007.
-**Carol Pierce**, Northeast Regional Representative

Please see Northeast Vision Teachers' Input Form on last page.

MEMBER NEWS

Paula Bress, one of Boston's TVIs, recently won a Fund for Teachers grant for summer travel and study from the Boston Plan for Excellence, the city's local education foundation. She began her journey in France, where she traced Louis Braille's life and accomplishments, from his birthplace in Coupvray, to the National Institute for Blind Youth in Paris, the school at which he taught until his death in 1852. She then visited schools, as well as braille and tactile graphic production centers, in England and Scotland. Paula has documented her trip with a journal and photographs that she has compiled into a booklet and accompanying slide presentation. She intends to use these resources as part of her inservice approach in Boston schools to promote wider understanding and appreciation for the power of braille literacy. If you would like more information about Paula's trip and her project, feel free to contact her at pmbress310@aol.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The following workshop will take place on February 2nd, 2007 and is free of charge:
Math Instructional Strategies for the Elementary School Student with Visual Impairment

Sponsored by the Perkins Training Center and Vision Hearing Network/ATECH Services
For more information, please contact **Betsy Bixler** (617-972-7213
Betsy.Bixler@perkins.org) or **Jessica Riel** (603-226-2900,
JessicaR@atechservices.org)

Mind...Body...Attitude!



Carroll Kids WELLNESS Program

When? Monday, February 19th through Thursday, February 22nd, 2007

Where? The Carroll Center for the Blind, Educational Services Building

What is it? Enjoy three days and three nights of WELLNESS FUN! Learn about fitness training, nutrition, yoga & meditation, swimming, and other activities which will help you to make healthy life choices for your mental and physical well-being. Note to parents: A discussion about the effects of drugs and alcohol will be led by a health education professional.

For whom? 12-18 year old students who are visually impaired and blind.

Cost? Program cost is \$300 for the three days and three nights, and includes housing, meals and materials in accessible formats.

For an application, please Email Nicole.Roth@Carroll.org or call 617-969-6200 x204
Street Newton MA 01458

Saturday, March 3, 2007

7th Annual Braille Literacy Celebration & Regional Qualifying Event for the National Braille Challenge



Presented by The Carroll Center for the Blind, Newton MA

Contact **Nicole Roth**, at Nicole.Roth@Carroll.org to register or call 1-617-969-6200
x204

(Contest details can be found at www.brailleinstitute.org)

NFB and Massachusetts Parents of Blind children Presents its 1st Annual Seminar **Making It Work!!**

A seminar for parents and educators

Saturday, March 10, 2007 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. MIT, Stratton Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA. Registration: Parent \$10.00; Child \$5.00 (Max Family Rate \$30.00). Continental breakfast, lunch, childcare and children's program all included!! We are proud to present our Special Guest Speaker **Carol Castellano**, Author of Making It Work: Educating the Blind/Visually Impaired Child in the Regular Classroom and The Bridge to Braille. Carol has years of experience as a parent advocate and educational consultant. Her sensible and logical approach to meeting the blind/visually-impaired child's needs will both enlighten and encourage you. Meet the

author and hear, first hand, her practical and innovative guidance for the education of blind/visually-impaired children in the regular classroom.

The New England Aquarium will be doing a hands-on traveling tidal pool exhibit. We will be offering quality childcare. There will also be games, arts & crafts and snacks.

If you have any questions please call coordinators: **Marlene Shapiro** (508) 788-0632 **Teri Turgeon** (508) 839-0323 **Dr. David Ticchi** (617) 453-8400.

Please RSVP by February 24, 2007

THIS & THAT

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library would like to introduce teachers to its brand new publication, the **Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library PerKIDS Newsletter**. The newsletter will circulate biannually to our younger patrons and to their teachers, schools, and libraries. The newsletter features library announcements, book lists, jokes, and games, and is available in large print, cassette, braille and via e-mail . Contact **Rachel Gould**, Children's & Youth Services Librarian at Rachel.Gould@Perkins.org or 617-972-7242 if you would like to have your name added to the list to receive the newsletter in large print.

SEEDLINGS NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR! It is time to register for a free braille book for 2007 from Seedlings through our "**Anna's Book Angel Project**": These free books are made possible by donations made to Seedlings in loving memory of **Anna Kirstina Bonde** who was killed by a drunk driver in 2001. Every blind or visually-impaired child is eligible to win one free book per year (please re-register each year.)

To register, please visit our website: www.seedlings.org, click on "Special Projects" and then on "Anna's Book Angel Project" and fill out the form. You can also register by using the form in the back of the Seedlings catalog, or by calling Seedlings at 800-777-8552.

We randomly select at least 10 children per week from those who have registered, and these children will receive one free book from their "wish lists." To date, almost 5000 books have been given away through this program, and we will continue doing so as long as funds permit. It is a wonderful way to honor Anna, who loved children and loved to read. If you would like to know more about her, please visit: www.annaangel.com

Now you can help Seedlings every time you do a search on the internet!: Do you ever "Google" or search the web with other search engines? Now you can search using GoodSearch and earn money for Seedlings Braille Books for Children with every search!

Just go to <http://www.goodsearch.com> and type "Seedlings" in the "Who do you GoodSearch for?" box. Be sure to bookmark the page and use it for all your searches. If just 1000 of you do an average of 2 searches per day, approximately \$7300 will be donated to Seedlings each year ... and with that money, we can make 730 more braille books each year!

Don't delay! Go to <http://www.goodsearch.com> today and designate Seedlings as your charity of choice, and then SEARCH FOR CENTS FOR SEEDLINGS! Oh, and please pass this notice along to all your friends and family! Thank you for your help!

Seedlings Braille Books for Children is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing high quality, low-cost children's literature in braille.

LOUIS BRAILLE: A TOUCH OF GENIUS

Happy Birthday, Louis Braille!!! (January 4th, 1809). National Braille Press is proud to present *Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius*. Drawing on primary sources that sort fact from fiction, it is the first ever full-color biography to include 30 never-before-translated letters, some written by Braille's own hand. Unearthed from a curator's private archives in France is an extraordinary collection of documents, photographs, and artistic works that enhances the bibliographic narrated of the phases of Braille's life as a student, young inventor, musician, and teacher in post-revolutionary France.



This exceptional book is now available for order on the National Braille Press website (www.braille.com), or call 800-548-7323 or 617-266-6160 ext. 20. Please be sure to specify the format you would like.

Available in the following formats:

Print...\$35

Braille (or PortaBook)...\$25 (no charge for Free Matter shipping)

Library/School Edition (Hardcover Braille)...\$50.

All of the images are professionally described in the braille edition.

RESOURCES

New Computer Training Manual: The Technology of Information and Communication (TIC) Companion is a 4-level, non sequential reference manual for people assisting blind children in the learning of computer use. A step by step method to introduce blind children to braille access in level one (to promote use of braille) progresses towards speech synthesis while slowly introducing Windows, wordprocessing, email, surfing, telephony, and even game playing by the time level 4

is reached. Three of the four levels of the TIC Companion are complete and can be downloaded from the Montreal Association for the Blind's website at: <http://www.mab.ca/new/content.php?lang=en&page=ticompanion§ion=programs&subsection=visionrehab&subsubsection=adaptedpc>. For questions or comments, contact **Paul Barber** at paulbarber@ssss.gouv.cq.ca, or call (514)489-8201 x10177.

Assistive Technology Loan Programs:

The Carroll Center's Loan Program is available to schools to wish to loan assistive technology on a trial basis to determine the usefulness for a student who is blind or visually impaired. The loans are from one to three months at \$50/month. For more information call **Dina Rosenbaum** at (800) 852-3131, or email dina.rosenbaum@carroll.org, or download an application at <http://www.carroll.org/technology/technology.php> .

Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program:

The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program offers access to reduced interest loans for assistive technology and related services. Qualified Massachusetts residents who have disabilities and their families will use the loans to purchase technology. The technology may include communication devices, adapted computers, Braille equipment, and hearing and vision aids. For more information, call **Jason Luciano** at (508) 751-6431 or **Kristina Koles** at (508)-751-6428, or go to www.massatloan.org .

NEW & EXCITING GIFT IDEAS

The following unique and creative gift ideas are now available for order on the National Braille Press website (www.braille.com), or call 800-548-7323 or 617-266-6160 ext. 20:

TACTILE MAZES



These sets of 11 tactile mazes on Thermoform paper are a fascinating introduction to the world of tactile graphics. These unique maze puzzles provide challenging fun from start to finish. Imagine tracing your finger along a grooved path that twists and turns, bumping into dead-ends or brick walls, before figuring out how to find your way through the tactile maze to arrive "home." They're lots

of fun - for kids and adults, blind and sighted! One set of 11 mazes is \$15.

PERSONALIZED BRAILLE PENDANTS

These personalized pendants by Kim Christiansen have become one of the most popular items to hit the Braille Jewelry market since Christiansen Designs created the world's first line of Braille Jewelry some 17 years ago. This handsome sterling silver pendant can be embossed with a person's name or a meaningful word, up to 7 cells. The pendant is 3/4" wide, and 1" to 1-3/4" high, depending on the number of braille cells needed for the word you select (the braille reads downward from the point where it attaches to the chain; to read it properly, you would hold the pendant horizontally in your left hand at the end where the chain attaches, and with your right hand read the braille from left to right). All pendants come with a beautiful 16 inch or 18 inch sterling silver snake chain - your choice. For yourself or as a gift for another, these lovely pieces will long be remembered.



Pendants are \$55.

STYLISH QUOTE MAGNETS

We selected four different magnets and simply placed transparent braille over the print quotes, so all can read. Each artful magnet is a 3.5" square that can be used to decorate any refrigerator door or hold up a photo or note. Quotes include the following:

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." – Helen Keller

"Do one thing every day that scares you." --Eleanor Roosevelt

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." -- Emerson

"We do not remember days...we remember moments." Cesare Pavese

Northeast Vision Teachers' Input Form

Those members of the **Northeast Region Group** who did not have time to respond to the questionnaire before the holidays are still welcome to do so. Your input is essential to planning a program that meets your needs for the start of 2007.

Carol Pierce, Northeast Regional Representative

The agenda for the November 28th Vision Teachers meeting was as follows:

Introductions:

(Correct e-mail and phone numbers are needed as well as addresses if you are willing to provide them.)

Suggested meeting times:

Weekdays after school () week nights () Sat. am ()

Suggested meeting places:

Public buildings () restaurants () homes ()

(Please provide names/contacts of specific places)

Suggested Topics:

Tom Miller – 'Welcoming the visually impaired child
Into the classroom' ()

Gayle Yarnall – ATC on site presentation – Salisbury ()

Pam Sudore – Technology that works! ()

Please make any other comments about things that you would like to see addressed. Your input is valuable if we are going to be a strong Northeast Group where we can learn from each other. Please return this form by mail to **Carol Pierce**, 31 Lakeside St., Haverhill MA, 01830 or email your responses to cnpierce1@comcast.net.