



AMESVIEW

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We are going **green**, unless you request a print copy, the AMESVIEW will only be sent via email!



Reduce, reuse, and recycle!



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings One and All! I'm writing to you for the first time as AMESVI President and I must admit I'm not sure what to say. In the past, so many people have served the organization so well and in so many capacities that they are a tough act to follow. I can only assure you that, with your support, I'll do my best to contribute what I can to keep the momentum going for another successful year of teaching and learning together.

Last year marked AMESVI's 10th anniversary, a real milestone for those of us who were there in the beginning, and hopefully for those of you who have joined us along the way.

AMESVI has its roots in the VRL Advisory Board of the late 80s, when a small group of professionals met regularly to discuss issues related to the many aspects of education for children with visual impairments, including service delivery, instructional materials, interagency collaboration and much more. We eventually formed an independent Steering Committee to consider the efficacy of creating a statewide professional organization, as our frustrations were serious and we felt we had a legitimate voice that needed to be heard. We started to meet after-hours and on weekends for long discussions, even disagreements, about how we should harness our passion and energy into meaningful channels for better communication, cooperation and ultimately improved services for our students. On Saturday, April 5, 1997 our charter meeting took place in Worcester MA, and we've been going strong ever since.

That's the very short version of a very long story about how we ended up here, 10 years later, as a viable and respected organization with an eclectic membership that is eager to support and be supported in the many facets of our work on behalf of all children with visual impairments. It seems we're here to stay, and now it is time to look ahead to the future.

AMESVI's original Statement of Purpose identified 7 general goals:

- professional development
- identification of resources
- sharing of information and ideas regarding assessment, curriculum, service provision
- networking thru local "talk groups" and "computers"
- development of a newsletter
- influence on policy-making and legislation
- funding to support our mission

In our relatively short history of ten years we have collectively achieved a great deal toward each one of these goals. Indeed, we have left our footprints in the sand. **Congratulations and thank-you to everyone who has in any way contributed to, participated in or benefited from the great work that AMESVI has accomplished to date!**

However, lest we become complacent in our well-deserved pride, it's time to look ahead to plan our course for the years that lie ahead. I challenge all of us to continue to seek ways to

- increase our visibility and our influence in the vision professions
- identify new ways of sharing what we know and knowing what we have yet to learn
- create an ever-improving environment for teaching and learning together
- keep the best interests of our students at the core of all that we do

I have some specific ideas in mind but I'd like to hear your thoughts as well. Please e-mail me your comments at any time at Karen.Ross@Carroll.org. I am truly excited about working with the current Board and am very grateful to all those who came before us to contribute their time and their talents. The work of any organization is made easier when many people share the load, so don't be surprised if you receive a call or e-mail from one of us on the Board, asking you to lend a hand. Best regards to all for a productive, safe and fulfilling school year!

Karen

A parting thought...
"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it.
We should all attempt therefore
to autograph our work with excellence".
~ Author unknown

REGIONAL UPDATES



South Shore/ Cape Region:

The South Shore/Cape Region's Spring meeting was held at the home of Jean Shea on May 29th. The weather was sunny and gorgeous, allowing us all to circulate from the house to the patio as we socialized and ate our delicious potluck dinner. There were seventeen people in attendance.

Darick Wright from the Low Vision Clinic at Perkins spoke to us about functional vision assessments and optometric exams. He shared a number of handouts which will help us in interpreting those sometimes difficult reports that we receive from eye doctors. Darick's presentation was informative and entertaining. We were all appreciative of the fact that he took time out of his very busy schedule to share some of his knowledge and experience with us.

We also celebrated the retirement of Georgia Hamlin at the get-together. Georgia is retiring after more than 30 years as a TVI. She will be greatly missed by the children in Fall River as well as by her colleague Helen Armstrong who has worked closely with Georgia for many years. We wish Georgia all the best.

Again, as I leave the position of South Shore/Cape representative, I'd like to thank the wonderful members of my region for coming out in force to share some time with other

members at our regional meetings. I have enjoyed all of you individually and as a group and hope my leadership has added something to your sense of community within the profession as well as given you information which will make your jobs easier. I'd like to thank Carrie Brasier, Lisa Jacobs, Tom Miller, Ann Barber and Darick Wright for sharing their knowledge and time with us these past two years.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Shea
South Shore/Cape Region Representative



MEMBER NEWS

GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD MEMBERS!



My name is **Beth Martin** and I am the new South Shore AMESVI representative. I'm 45 years young, I'm married with 2 children and I reside in Taunton. My husband's name is Dan and my son, Drew is 16 and my daughter, Laura is 14. My hobbies are reading and travel. I belong to a Book Club that meets monthly and I sing in my church choir. I have taught CCD classes in the past and have been involved with city-wide cleanups. I like to be involved. I graduated from Boston College in 1985 with a M.Ed. in Special Ed. /Vision. I currently work as a TVI for the Taunton School System. I previously worked for the Rockland School System for 17 years. I had been asked before to run for a position on the AMESVI board but always felt like I didn't have enough time to devote to the organization. But don't we all feel that way before we take on projects and positions? I know I have big shoes to fill following Jean Shea as the South Shore Rep. Jean's meetings were always a good blend of useful information and socializing. I hope to plan at least 2 yearly gatherings that will address concerns of members, keep them informed of AMESVI happenings, and keep abreast of vision issues. Of course, keeping in touch so we don't feel isolated and sharing work/war stories is also an important feature of our meetings. I hope to see many South Shore members soon.

Laura Koester – Originally from Buffalo, Laura attended SUNY Geneseo for a BS in Special Education and an MS in a dual-certification program in Vision/O&M. She learned about the field since her youngest sister is totally blind due to retinoblastoma (she's now the director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind). Laura worked for a collaborative in Rochester NY for nearly 10 years, and then moved to

Chicago, where she worked for the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind under Mary Zabelski and the SW Cook County Special Ed. Collaborative under Jodi Sticken. After moving to Marlborough Massachusetts in 1998 with her husband and children, she began working as an itinerant TVI and O&M Specialist for the Ed Services Dept of the Carroll Center for the Blind. Her current students are in the Wachusett Regional district. Laura has worked with children at the pre-k and elementary level since 1985, although some of her students are now high school age (much like her own children, ages 17, 14, and 12). She enjoys gardening, scrap booking, stamping, aerobics, and reading when she has a little spare time.

Laura was the AMESVI Central MA Regional Representative from 2003-2006, and is looking forward to re-joining the Board in her new capacity as Recording Secretary.



Remember October is white cane month



UPCOMING EVENTS

WORKSHOP FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS offered by *The Carroll Center for the Blind*
Educational Services Department, Newton MA

Session I: Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Session II: Tuesday, November 25th, 2008

This workshop is intended for Paraprofessionals and teaching assistants who work with students with visual impairments in local school settings. Strategies and Resources to promote access to the general and expanded core curricula through specialized instruction will focus on

- * **Independent Learning**
- * **Academic & Social Inclusion**
- * **Adaptive Technologies & Learning Media**
- * **Communication & Self-Advocacy**
- * **Student Safety**

Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships among the Para, the Classroom Teacher, the Parent and the Special Educator (TVI) will be discussed.

Contact Sue.Malone@Carroll.org for more information

The AMESVI Fall Conference

...is scheduled for **Thursday**, October 23, 2008 at the College of the **Holy Cross, Worcester, MA**. Among our speakers will be Miriam Freedman, who was rescheduled from the Spring 2007 conference.

This one day conference will address the legal basics that educators need to know and do regarding special education as well as ADA access within public schools.

National speaker and attorney Miriam Freedman , M.A., J.D. will detail "The Legal Requirements that ALL Educators Need to Know About Special Education and 504" addressing how we educate children with disabilities in the general curriculum appropriately and provide them with an educational benefit. Specifically for children with visual impairment, what unique or specific legal requirements do educators need to know? Under Section 504, let us ask how we provide our students with the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.



MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW--PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

THIS & THAT

What book has been translated into 56 languages, sold more than 40 million copies in 150 countries, and is one of the best-selling books in history? It's **The Alchemist** by Paulo Coelho, a symbolic story that urges its readers to follow their personal legends. This is a self-motivational book that deals with themes like fate versus will, the power of love, and "controlled luck." Now available from National Braille Press for the same price as the print edition, \$13. For ages junior high – adult. Online: www.braille.com. Tel: 617.266.6160, ext. 20. Fax: 617.437.0456.

The Northeast Vision Teachers have finally found a 'home'! Since January we have been meeting at Peabody High School and that seems to be a good geographic spot for the most people. On May 7th Rachel Gould of the Perkins Library reviewed all the options available (FOR FREE) through the library. Teachers were encouraged to e-mail Rachel before hand so she could bring answers to all questions as well as demonstrate some equipment use. Due to busy end-of-year schedules, those in attendance decided to wait until fall for the next meeting.

South Shore AMESVI Meets

By Beth Martin

South Shore AMESVI members met on May 7, 2008 at the Catholic Center at Bridgewater State College for a regional meeting. Patricia Connolly of the college's Disability Resources (DR) office came and spoke about the services offered to handicapped students and especially visually impaired students.

DR is staffed by 2 full-time and 2 part-time employees as well as a number of student readers and trained tutors. They serve 500-600 students. Currently 10 of those students are visually impaired. DR has a computer lab equipped with Zoom Text, Jaws, Duxbury, a Braille embosser and scanners, however, Patricia stated that many students come in with their own technology. She also cited RFB&D CD's and Scan & Read discs as resources. DR also encourages students to join SAC, Students Accepting a Challenge, a disabilities club on campus.

Students with disabilities are usually identified by the admissions office or by the students and/or their parents. DR offers a 2 day Pre-College Workshop for students to discuss advocacy, approaching instructors and acclimating to college life. Parent programs are also available. A first year advising program is also in place to regularly meet with students to see how they're coping.

Incoming students require documentation of their handicap from a medical provider, psychologist or diagnostician. An IEP or 504 Plan is not sufficient documentation. To our surprise, she informed us that 504 Plans do not exist in college. Rather, the college is required only to provide "appropriate academic adjustments". Patricia and her staff, however, seem to go above and beyond the call of duty as she related to us the many unique situations they've encountered.

Patricia also informed us that students sometimes identify themselves as handicapped to the college but not with DR. However, all academic accommodations come through her office. Students cannot expect accommodations if they do not identify themselves. DR writes all accommodation letters for students to present to their professors. AMESVI members concluded, get to know the disabilities office when students are looking at colleges!

Patricia had good knowledge of services provides by the MA Commission. O&M instructors through MA Commission orient students to the campus. She said they try to plan classes for some students so they're only traveling to a few buildings, especially in their first year. VI students can request guides from DR if traveling to an unfamiliar part of campus.

Patricia was a wonderful, knowledgeable presenter. She encouraged us to do 3 things:

- (1) help make your students as capable and independent as possible
- (2) help them be knowledgeable regarding technology
- (3) to develop a good relationship with MA Commission. She also referred us to a booklet entitled "Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" published by the US Dept. of Ed. and available at www.ed.gov/print.

Thank you, Patricia!

After the presentation, a tasty pot luck supper along with some "salty language" was served. You had to be at the meeting to get that reference, right Liz Scandone? There are some good cooks in the AMESVI bunch too (great salad by Josee Kentak, unusual couscous by Richard DeFilippis, and yummy meatballs courtesy of Claudia Jacobsen). Thanks to all for attending.

RESOURCES



Learn from home with these self paced courses!

- Using Accessible Graphing Calculator, \$50.00
- Using TGD Pro, \$25.00
- Using the Duxbury Braille Translator (also offered with an instructor) \$100.00
- Achieving Mouselessness \$100.00

To Register go to:

http://www.carroll.org/services/pro_seminars.php

Email dina.rosenbaum@carroll.org for more information.

THE CARROLL CENTER FOR THE BLIND

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