



AMESVIEW

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**The AMESVI board members
for the 2010-2011 year are:**

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March 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello AMESVI members,

Could spring really be around the corner? I hope so! This winter has been tough for everyone. But the weather is changing and it is so much easier for those who provide itinerant services. We can take off our boots, scarves, and gloves. Yea!

And what an exciting spring of professional development opportunities in MA! From the technology conference in Western MA to our annual Spring Conference in Dedham, there is a lot going on. We are so lucky to have so many choices!

I hope you will be attending our spring conference! It is scheduled for April 2 in Dedham and this year we will be featuring two national leaders in our field. Jean Olmstead, author of "Itinerant Teaching: Tricks of the Trade for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments" will be discussing effective teaching strategies for itinerant teachers. Do you know that she was instrumental in establishing the AER Division 16 for Itinerant Personnel? Dona Sauerburger, well-known for her work with street-crossing issues and teaching deaf-blind travelers, will be conducting a program on preparing visually impaired students to assess and cross streets with no stop sign or traffic signal. We are very pleased to be able to offer a program specifically for our O&M members. The schedule is designed to allow time for both groups to come together and network with colleagues. For more information, go to www.amesvi.org. I hope to see you there.

Katrena Traut-Savino, President
katrenaatrautsavino@bpsma.org



Calling All Nominees!!!

Hello AMESVI members,

It is that time of year again. We are looking to recruit vibrant, motivated and dedicated people to join our executive board. You might be thinking, "I just don't have the time". Depending on the position it only takes a few hours of your time a month. Do you like networking with other people that work with students with visual impairments? We will have the following positions open for the 2011-2012 AMESVI year:

President-Elect - Assist the President as requested; perform all duties of the President in the President's absence; and oversee the publication of a newsletter. After serving in this office for one year, the President-Elect shall become the President.

Treasurer - Collect dues, maintain a bank account, pay the bills, keep an accurate record of all financial transactions, and report on the financial status of the Association periodically to the Executive Board and annually to the general membership.

Recording Secretary - Keep accurate written minutes of all meetings of the Executive Board and of the general membership, and maintain all reports, records, and archives of the Association.

Regional Representatives - Promote communication among the members within geographical regions of the state, and represent their concerns to the Executive Board.

- **Western MA Representative** needed
- **Great Boston Representative** needed
- **South Shore/Cape Representative** needed

Please contact Jessica Erlich at Jessica.Erlich@hotmail.com or 617-970-8479 if you are at all interested.

REGIONAL UPDATES

South Shore/ Cape Regional Report

The South Shore usually has a regional meeting in the fall. Unfortunately this did not happen in the fall of 2010 and I take full responsibility for that lapse. My own job was totally overwhelming at the beginning of the school year and I was unable to plan a get-together. I was hoping that the weather

would be uneventful this winter and that members would feel comfortable driving to a winter meeting. Well, we all know how that turned out. With snow storms coming about every 5 days, I didn't feel I could set a meeting date with any confidence that we would not get snowed out. So, at this point I am just waiting on calmer weather.

I have a copy of the DVD "CVI Perspectives" for us to view as a group and then discuss. I also have an article on the CVI Roman Scale to distribute. If any other members have CVI information they would like to bring to the meeting, contributions would be welcomed. CVI was a topic that AMESVI conference goers listed as one they would like more information about. Mark your calendars!

What: South Shore/Cape AMESVI Regional Meeting

Topic: CVI (video & handout)

When: Wed. April 27, 2011 4:30-6:30 pm

Where: The Catholic Center @ Bridgewater State College (upstairs this time)

Food and Socialization: But of course!

Hope to see you there.

Beth Martin bmtaunton@aol.com

All of the other regions are planning for spring meetings or to try and use gototmeeting.com for conference calls/computer access. Watch your email for further information!

UPCOMING EVENTS

AMESVI Spring Conference

Friday, April 1, 2011

8-5 p.m.

Dedham Holiday Inn, 55 Ariadne Road, Dedham, Ma

Techniques and Tools on April Fools

Practical Approaches, Methods, and Strategies for Working with Students with Visual Impairment

This year's conference will feature two concurrent programs to meet the needs of itinerant teachers and orientation and mobility specialists.

We are pleased to present two leaders in our field:

Jean Olmstead, M.A. and **Dona Sauerburger, M.A., COMS**

Come and learn new information, share your knowledge, and hear what your colleagues are doing that works.

Participants may attend only one program for the day. Breaks, lunch, and the business meeting will bring both groups together.

The conference is easy to get to, located at Exit 15A off of Route 95/128.

Jean Olmstead -Effective Strategies for the Itinerant Teacher

- B.A. Illinois State University; M.A. San Francisco State University
- Author: Itinerant Teaching: Tricks of the Trade for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments, AFB, 1991 and 2005 and numerous articles for professional publications
- Itinerant Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and Orientation and Mobility Specialist for 37 years; retired
- Founding chair: AER Division 16 for Itinerant Personnel
- Peer reviewer: Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness

This program will cover:

Working conditions – building a workable schedule

Organization – the key to efficiency and effectiveness

Planning a successful in-service training

Lesson Plans / Forms

Stress in the itinerant setting

Participants will receive a certificate of attendance that can be used towards PDPs

Dona Sauerburger - Preparing Visually Impaired Students to Assess and Cross Streets with No Stop Sign or Traffic Signal

- Masters from Western Michigan University
- Has taught O&M for more than 40 years
- Special interests are street-crossing issues and teaching deaf-blind travelers
- Written articles and given presentations about both topics throughout the world
- Recipient of the AER O&M Division's 2004 Lawrence Blaha Award, and AER's 1994 C. Warren Bledsoe Award for literature

This program will cover:

What's going on here?

Situations of uncertainty -- what are they? How to recognize them?

You are in a Situation of Uncertainty -- What Now?

Analyzing risks, making decisions

Considering alternatives when the risk is not acceptable

Teaching students to determine when there is a crossable gap in traffic

Teaching students to recognize Situations of Uncertainty

Teaching students to determine when it's clear enough to cross (in situations where that is possible)

Checklists -- organizing yourself for teaching

Application

Discuss how to apply these principles to YOUR population!

Practice makes perfect!

Put on your coats or your sunscreen, let's DO IT!

Participants will receive a certificate of attendance and be eligible for ACVREP credits.

Early Connections: Taking Care of Our Children ...Taking Care of Ourselves

April 30, 2011

8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

at Perkins School for the Blind

175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Please join us for our 28th regional conference for families of children with visual impairments including those with additional disabilities or deafblindness ages birth-seven years.

This year's sessions will include:

- Don't Get Lost Online: Finding the Best Family Web Resources
- Communication Partners: Early Interactive Communication
- Adapting Toys for Children with Cortical Visual Impairment
- The Expanded Core Curriculum
- Creating Literacy Kits
- How Teams Collaborate Effectively
- "Apps"olutely Engaging and Educational: Intro to IPAD for Children with Special Needs
- Understanding The Brain: Supporting Learning for Children with Disabilities
- Sleep Strategies
- Transitions Panel: Moving From EI to Preschool and Beyond
- Sharing Ideas for Free Play Activities

Keynote: Jodee Crace

"Raising Your Child: It's A Journey Not a Destination"

For Registration information go to www.perkins.org or call 617-972-7393

AER Regional Conference Featuring the AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Conference Within a Conference

August 12-14, 2011

Boston Park Plaza

Boston, Massachusetts

Sharing Helpful Hints

In Search of the Perfect Slant Board

By Beth Martin bmtaunton@aol.com

For the past year or two, I have been on a search for the perfect slant board. Ideally, I would like one that can be used as a book stand and a slanted writing surface. It seems most slant boards are for one or the other purpose. I would also like one that is light-weight and portable. So I did my research and bought a couple to try.

The Visual Edge Slant Board is \$30 and is 12"x18" in size, slightly large for a student desk. It has a detachable book ledge that is held in place with Velcro. It has legs that bend inward so it can be folded flat. There is a clip to hold papers in place. The board is also a dry erase and magnetic board. It is white in color which does not provide contrast when papers are placed on it. I've had my student place a black piece of paper on it for contrast when placing white hand-outs on it. This slant board is available at www.visualedgesb.com.

Therapro has several slant boards available on its website. The Write Slant Board is \$39.95 and available in 2 sizes, 15"x13" and 13 1/2" x9". It does not have a book ledge. It has a clip to hold paper and comes in a smoke color that provides a contrasting background. It does not fold flat. I have a student who uses one and it is quite rugged and durable. She does prop books up against it but without a book ledge the book can slide flat.

I recently purchased a Better Board Slant Board from Therapro. It comes in small (12"x12 1/2") and large (19"x12") sizes which cost \$15.99 and \$19.99 respectively. It is made of corrugated plastic, can fold flat and is very light-weight and portable. It can be ordered in black or blue to provide a contrasting background color. The plastic clips to hold paper are flimsy and not easy to open. This board is also not easy for young children to fold to its upright position. This board is an example of "you get what you pay for".

An Aluminum Collapsible Slant Board is also available from Therapro. The 12"x12" board costs \$59.95. It is light-weight and folds to a half inch thick. It has no book edge. It has a clip to hold papers in place. It has a steel color background. I have not had any experience with this board but it seems a bit pricey.

In the past I had good luck with the Easy Reader Reading Stand from Maxi Aids. It was light-weight, portable, had a flip-out book ledge and multiple, adjustable reading angles. It had a clip to hold papers and an elastic to hold books open. It cost \$20.95 and could be ordered in black for a contrasted background. The last time I tried to order one I was told it was no longer in production.

Unfortunately, I have always disliked the boards available from APH. Their boards are basically for reading, not writing. The Desk Top Reading Stand is much too big (23"x18") for a student's desk. In my experience with the GrandStand Portable Reading Easel, the locking mechanism is unreliable and the board can fall flat at inconvenient times. Both stands have a book ledge, page clamps and built-in carrying handles. The Shafer Reading Stand looks like a music stand with a tripod base and a swivel arm that can rotate and tilt in many positions. In my opinion, it is impractical for the classroom.

I am still on a quest to find the perfect slant board. The Visual Edge Slant Board and the Write Slant Board are my favorites but each still has a drawback or two. I would like to hear from other AMESVI

members who have had a good experience with a slant board or any other product that would be helpful to your fellow TVI's.

The Power of Keyboard Help

By Kate Crohan kbcrohan@comcast.net

“Keyboard learn/help” has different names, depending on the screen reader or notetaker.

Specific Screenreader Commands to execute:

Jaws: Jaws key (insert) 1 (repeat to exit)

Window Eyes Insert-1 – “Keyboard Describer”

Voiceover: Control-option-k

Serotek: Modifier-h

NVDA: Modifier-1

Apex/MPower: From the Main Menu: k; E-space to exit

- It promotes independence: Students (and teachers!) have the option of using it, no matter their level. At the most basic, it identifies the keys, allowing the student to find a key without asking the teacher or changing a document beyond recognition when attempting to locate the key.
- Reinforces the memorization of new keys and shortcut keys as they are learned –provides a way to practice for students who have short-term memory issues; good way to remind even long-time computer users of infrequently-used keys.
- It provides immediate knowledge of the keyboard and constant reinforcement when learning to use a new computer; even a proficient computer user needs a method to become acquainted with a new keyboard – independently!
- Reminds user of shortcut keys, depending on the program as they can change.
- A good “bridge” to learning to use the “help” available on notetakers and computers.
- Provides a way to learn to type the student's name, even when the student is first introduced to the keyboard and is just learning the home row; typing your name is very empowering.
- Offers a way to practice writing passwords for a network log-in or a typing program; I don't recommend it for files or computers – another discussion, perhaps! This is particularly useful for students who have spelling difficulty or fine-motor issues and need the practice. Listening to *** doesn't exactly give feedback when attempting to type a password! Use earphones to reinforce the need to keep passwords private. The student will learn to type his/her password independently early on rather than to have the teacher hovering nearby to offer feedback, providing the student with another means to become more independent and self-sufficient, even when the password goes beyond the letters that have been learned.

iPad

By Barbara Gillmeister, TVI Bgillmeister@comcast.net

I am no techie, but I do keep up to date with what is available for our students and I try to attend many seminars. I really just jumped right into buying my iPad. I have owned it for almost a year now. I have found it an invaluable tool as an itinerant teacher. To begin with, the resolution is amazing! It also has accessibility features to be able to enlarge print or pictures, at the flick of a finger. It also has a speech feature called 'voice over' which acts as a screen reader. The portability makes it easily taken from 'circle time' back to a desk, without skipping a beat.

The fact that it has my calendar, email and documents on it is just the beginning.

As a tool for direct service to my students it has become technology that I carry with me always. I have one group of medically fragile students. They have very limited abilities; they are the types of students you would recommend vision stimulation for. The size and portability allows me to place the iPad right in front of these students, I mean inches away, even if they are in a wheel chair. I can even hold it in my hand while looking at different apps with my students. I have almost completely replaced using a light box for using my iPad. I am not saying that these are exactly the same, but I can offer so much more so easily for myself and my students. For example, I can find clear, crisp pictures from the internet or ones that I have made on my iPad and use those in a high resolution setting.

I have students with limited motor abilities. They can, however, make a swiping motion. This allows them to use the iPad in ways, sometimes easier than using switches.

I have apps that are musical instruments: a dulcimer, a xylophone, drums, holiday bells, keyboards and more. I could not begin to bring these instruments to my students. The music draws in their visual attention. I have apps that have great pictures of animals. When the picture is chosen, the animal makes a sound. I have apps with fish that swim from side to side on the screen, singing the alphabet song. The colors are amazing! Vibrant!

Older students can instantly get information from the Internet and be able to read it, by changing the size with the flick of a finger.

The iPad is a great device for students with CVI. Simple, clear pictures or words of any size can be presented. You can make pictures yourself or copy from the Internet. The student can use the iPad right in front of them with almost no set up time.

I also have apps with near and distant vision screening tests!

A little practical information: the iPad does have an internal keyboard, but you can hook up an external keyboard. The cost of apps varies. There are many that are free and many that cost about 99 cents and some that cost almost \$200 like Proloquo2go. My iPad came with Kindle on it along with Dragon Speak Naturally and Dragon Search. The Apple stores run basic classes, for free, to give you a quick how-to on the iPad. I have also taken two classes about apps and iPads through TEC Collaborative in Dedham.

Every day there is something exciting about the iPad. I am suggesting it more and more for my students. In the world of accessible technology I think this is one of the most all encompassing devices out there. It is also one of the most cost effective. I see and hear about more and more school systems making purchases in bulk of iPads. Everyone should look into owning one.

Braille Signature on Email

By Laura Koester, TVI/COMS lkoester@comcast.net
,Laura ,Koe/]

Many people have asked about adding braille to their email signature. I can't recall if I downloaded the free Duxbury font or if it was already in the list of fonts on the menu bar ("Braille") in Microsoft Outlook. Eileen Curran (eileen.curran@carroll.org) then reminded me that adding commas before the initial letters makes the dot 6 for capital letters; the slash becomes st; and the bracket becomes er so my name would be ,laura ,koe/]

I thought of another braille question – with all the new i-devices (iPods, iPads, etc.) I wondered what is the proper way to write the names in braille? I wondered if there are any words related to all our new technology that we need to be able to know how to braille for our students that aren't in the rule books yet (such as device names with capitals in the middle of a word, website names, etc.)

Again I turned to Eileen, who called the head proofreader at NBP. Eileen's response: "I was pretty sure it was brailled l,pad or l,pod without a letter sign or anything else, but I wanted to be sure. He said they always brailled it as above. I then asked those what-if questions, like what if it was iNote? Wouldn't the capital N read "ation"? He says there are no rules for this, but braille readers would be able to read it just fine."

Programs for Students

ABC CAMP PRIDE New Durham, New Hampshire August 21 to 27

For information visit their website at www.blindcitizens.org or call the office at 781-961-1023

Camp Inter-Actions Georges Mills, NH for ages 8-15

For information contact: Debbie Gross campinfo@inter-actions.org 603-228-2803

Carroll Center for the Blind summer programs www.carroll.org

For information contact: Karen Ross, Education Director
617-969-6200, ext 237, karen.ross@carroll.org

Independence 2011, Blind Industries and Services of Maryland - June 19 – August 5, includes attending the National Federation of the Blind convention and participating in the NFB Youth Slam.
For information contact: Amy C. Phelps aphelps@bism.org or to view the flyer: [Independence 2011](#)

Lowell Association for the Blind 169 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852

For information contact: Christie Cleaver, Youth and Adult Program Coordinator

(978) 454-5704, ccleaver@lowellassociationfortheblind.org

Perkins Outreach Short Courses for spring, summer & the fall Space Exploration Program.
<http://www.perkins.org/community-programs/outreach-student-services/students.html>

For information contact Kelly Cote, Supervisor of Outreach Short Courses
617-972-7867, kelly.cote@perkins.org

The Youth Leadership Forum Bridgewater State University July 2011.

For information contact: Colleen Flanagan, cflanagan@eastersealsma.org, 1-800-2756 ext. 410.

RESOURCES

Accessible Instructional Materials Library Policy Update: Teacher Registration

By Carrie M. Brasier cbrasier@aimlibrary.org

In conjunction with the Federal Quota Census each year, we are asking for each TVI to fill out a Teacher Registration, with all your current information, and submit with your APH student census. Year after year, we have e-mails bounce back, telephone numbers that do not work, and snail mail that gets returned. We are just trying to keep up! Make a copy for yourself and if your information doesn't change, you can just forward it every year. We do not need a copy of your Teacher Certification. If you are working on a waiver, from out of state, or student teaching, just let us know. All forms can be found on our web site and can be e-mailed: www.aimlibrary.org.

CHARGE Syndrome

By Lisa Jacobs, M.Ed. lisa.jacobs@perkins.org

Well our friends in California have done it again. The California Deaf-Blind Services have created another very informative and practical newsletter that addresses all concerns that are related for children who are deafblind. This quarter David Brown compiled a document that I found very helpful and insightful, it is entitled; Vision Issues for People with CHARGE Syndrome. It addresses the "multi-layered complexity of vision issues faced by many people with CHARGE syndrome." Multi-layered indeed and complex, I found the information family friendly and the photos very helpful to explain eye conditions and the uniqueness that can be found in people with CHARGE syndrome. Please check out this website and the many things it offers but especially the eleven page document under the heading of newsletter (Winter 2010 vol 15) on the www.cadbs.org website. There are two interesting webcast videos (one is an overview of CHARGE and the other is on the topic of considerations of the impact of CHARGE on communication needs and learning styles) both of these are have free access just by visiting www.perkins.org/resources/webcasts/.

Rolling Into Place

by Jane Kronheim TVI jane.kronheim@gmail.com

Hi everyone, in 2003 I published a book with APH called *Rolling Into Place, a Rolling Right Along Book*. Some of you may be using this book which involves a velcro ball, moving along a velcro pathway to its destination....a nose on a great big face! I would love to have some feed back from those of you who have been using this tactile graphic book with your young vi students. Since writing the story, which is in poetic framework, I have written and designed several others that I use with many of the kids I see. Please feel free to share your thoughts, insights and then some about *Rolling Into Place*. I thank all of you ahead of time.

Is It Remotely Possible To Learn This?

By Gayle Yarnall gayle.yarnall@perkins.org

Perkins Products has expanded its training opportunities. Now we can help you or your student get the most out of their adaptive technology.

Michelle worked closely with a student for several years both in school and at home. When the student went away to college, Michelle was able to continue helping remotely. She helped the student work through getting all her technology set up at school and teaching her how to use new features in upgrades.

Have you recently upgraded your screen reader or Duxbury software? If so you may be wondering how to use the new features and how to incorporate them into your student's curriculum. You might even need help installing the software. Have you recently moved to a new version of windows? Are you wondering how to access those silly ribbons in MS Word?

Sometimes we can be intimidated by the formal training thing and we just need a little one on one help with one tiny little problem. Rather than spending hours trying to solve the problem yourself, you can jump on line with Michelle or Arthur and get their personalized help. You will probably find that they can solve your problem in a matter of minutes. Please contact us to get more information about this new service. You can visit us on line at www.perkinsproduct.org or call (617)972-7808 and ask about our remote training.

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library wants you to keep up to date by receiving our monthly PerKIDS enewsletter and the biannual edition in large print, braille, and/or audio. Contact us if you would like to sign up! Contact: Rachel Gould, BTBL Children's Services Librarian
Rachel.Gould@Perkins.org

The Training & Educational Resources Program has developed an eNewsletter specifically for Educators. The Educator Series will allow busy professionals to stay connected and benefit from the collective knowledge and expertise of leaders in the field of visual impairment and deafblindness. The first issue includes an excerpt from our publication *How We See It* as well as an interview with Dennis Lolli, one of the authors. The “Ask the Expert” column features Veronika Bernstein discussing impulsivity as a challenging behavior. You can also learn about earning ACVREP credits for viewing webcasts. Click here to view the newsletter http://support.perkins.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=9873.0&printer_friendly=1
Questions contact Betsy McGinnity, Director at betsy.mcginnity@perkins.org.