



## **NCAERolina News December, 2010**

### ***President's Message***

#### ***William Tubilleja***

On behalf of the NC chapter of AER Board Members, we send best wishes to all of our members for a festive and joyful Holiday. If my colleagues are any indication, I am sure that most of you have been very busy with work and are looking forward to some time with your families and friends. I don't think it is a stretch to say that we all deserve some time away from work to recharge our batteries a bit for the New Year. Your Chapter's Board members have been working with the NC Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness planning committee along with the other participating organizations to put together a worthwhile conference event for our members and others who work in the field. For information on the conference, please go to [www.ncaer.net](http://www.ncaer.net) for registration information as well as information on the conference as it becomes available. You may also contact the Conference Planning Chair, Daniel Simmons, at [Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com](mailto:Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com) for questions pertaining to the conference. If you are interested in presenting, please submit a call for presentation form to Kathy Davis at [mary.k.davis@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:mary.k.davis@dhhs.nc.gov). The 2011 conference theme is "Learn From the Past, Work for the Future." While the theme has a focus on transition, conference sessions will touch on most areas of our field. The conference will once again be held on the campus of The Governor Morehead School in Raleigh.

During the conference, we will honor a deserving colleague with the presentation of the Rachel Rawls Award. The Rachel Rawls Award was established by the NCAER in 1989 to honor Dr. Rawls and to recognize achievement in the field of work with the blind and visually impaired. For nomination forms, please go to [www.ncaer.net](http://www.ncaer.net). You will find the link at the bottom of the home page.

The NCAER annual meeting will take place during the conference on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. In part, the agenda will include nominating and approving two at-large Board members. If you

are interested in serving on the Board as an at-large member, please submit your nomination past President Kathy Davis.

Preceding this spring's conference is a new and exciting event. The first annual "Raising Cane 5K Charity Race/Walk" will take place on March 26, 2011. The race/walk will be open to all interested athletes and sighted guides will be provided.

Again, I hope your Holiday season will be warm and filled with great experiences for the memory books. (Or perhaps your Facebook page ??) Here's to a Happy New Year !

### ***From the President-Elect***

#### ***Daniel Simmons***

I cannot believe that we are at the end of another year! This has been my first year serving as your president-elect, and it has been a busy one. During the spring and summer many people associated with the VI community advocated for the needs of children with visual impairments to State legislators. In my hours away from school, I wrote and delivered letters to legislators and spoke with them when I could find them in the Legislative Building, in an effort to support GMS. I had a great learning experience as I spent part of a day with Gary Ray in the General Assembly. Gary is highly active in the community and is one of the best advocates I have ever seen.

In addition to advocating, my duties as president-elect include serving as chairperson of the planning committee for the North Carolina Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness (NCCVIB). It has been my pleasure working with such a fine group of people: Barbria Bacon, Kathy Davis, Kathryn Flynn, Claire Hakin, Debbie Jackson, Julie Kagy, Dee Martin, William Tubilleja, Eddie Weaver, and Adam Woodrum. The committee has been working on yet another great conference; I am looking forward to the awesome presentations that are to be given at the conference.

In addition to planning the conference, NCAER Board Member Adam Woodrum and I, with help from NCCVIB Planning Committee

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members, have been working on an exciting event called "Raising Cane Charity 5K Race/Walk." Raising Cane's goals are to support and encourage athleticism in the visually impaired population of NC and to raise funds to assist people with visual impairments. In this newsletter you will find a letter explaining the race and how the funds will be used.

I wish you happy and safe holidays, and I look forward to seeing you at the conference in the spring.

### ***A Big THANK YOU!***

As committee chairman of Raising Cane, I would like to publicly thank the following for making this event possible: Lanier Cansler, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, for allowing Raising Cane to use the Dorothea Dix Campus for the event; Rick Stogner, Dave Krotoszynski, Terry Hatcher, and Jean Parris at the Office of the Secretary for helping me with the necessary paperwork for using the campus; Bob Morris and Amanda Clark of Fleet Feet of Raleigh for recognizing the value of this event and committing their efforts to help us make Raising Cane a great event and for helping secure sighted guides for our runners.

### ***2010 Stephen E. Sallee Awards of Excellence (Sonya VanHorn, PAT)***

(The Grant Advisory Council of the NC Assistive Technology Program recognizes individuals, professionals, and organizations that have made significant contributions to the lives of people with disabilities through their efforts in the field of assistive technology.)

Julie Kagy is the recipient of the 2010 Stephen E. Sallee Award of Excellence in the AT Professional category. Julie's passion is to provide assistive technology services to students with special needs. As the Consultant for Visual Impairment and Assistive Technology in the Exceptional Children Division of the NC Department of Public Instruction, Julie serves as a resource to local education agencies and is involved with program development for the education for students with disabilities. Julie realized that providing the appropriate technology to students was only the first step in providing quality assistive technology services. Julie has organized AT Summer Training Institutes for classroom teachers, AT

professionals and staff in local school systems. As teams gain experience using assistive technology, they become mentors for newly formed AT teams. In the last 4 years, 21 AT Support Teams have received extensive training in the effective use of AT in the classroom, how to integrate the use of AT devices by students as they complete required standardized testing, and the importance of providing access to assistive technology to students with disabilities. The AT teams provide support for regular classroom teachers as they learn to integrate AT into the classroom setting. Julie is also the NC coordinator for NIMAC, the National instructional materials Access Center. School systems can download textbooks from NIMAC for students that need textbooks in alternative formats rather than the time-consuming process of ordering books from each publisher. Julie coordinates the AT list-serv to provide current assistive technology information, chairs the AT consortium, and serves on the NCATP Grant Advisory Council. For her dedication and commitment to providing access to assistive technology in NC schools and the tremendous impact on the lives of students with disabilities, and her collaborative efforts, Julie Kagy is most deserving of the Assistive Technology Award of Excellence.

### ***2011 Braille Challenge (Debbie Jackson)***

The NC Braille Literacy Council and its partners are pleased to sponsor the NC Regional Braille Challenge to be held on February 17, 2011, on the campus of The Governor Morehead School in Raleigh. The Western NC Braille Challenge will be held on Friday, February 18, at the Catawba Rosenwald Education Center, 403 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, SW, Catawba, NC. Local event sponsors include the Friends of the NC Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and staff of the Library, the NC Department of Public Instruction and staff of the Outreach Program for the Visually Impaired, and The Governor Morehead School.

We appreciate the support the event has received from teachers of the visually impaired students and families of students. We hope that this year's Challenge will be even bigger and better and that we will have several winners to qualify for the national competition in Los Angeles to be held in June.

The prizes for the regional competition and sponsors of the National Braille Challenge include the Braille Institute, National Braille Press, Humanware, and Seedlings Books.

The Braille Challenge is an excellent opportunity for students in all grades to demonstrate skills in a number of areas which, depending on the student's grade level, include spelling, reading comprehension, chart and graph reading, proofreading, and speed and accuracy. The event provides a time for students to meet other Braille users—something which might not be part of the routine when a student is the only Braille user in his or her school. And, while the day is primarily about the competition, the many volunteers who work with the Challenge make it a day of fun for everyone involved!

If you would like additional information about the Braille Challenge in general you may go to [www.braillechallenge.org](http://www.braillechallenge.org) or for specific information about the Challenge in Raleigh, you may contact Debbie Jackson at 919-821-3410 or [dcj1115@bellsouth.net](mailto:dcj1115@bellsouth.net). For information about the Challenge to be held in Catawba, you may contact Angela C. Biggerstaff, TVI, Catawba County Schools, 828-241-2477 or [angela\\_coulter@catawba.k12.nc.us](mailto:angela_coulter@catawba.k12.nc.us)

### **Getting Literate in Louisville**

Here's something for your 2011 calendar: the Tenth Biennial Getting in Touch with Literacy will be held in Louisville, KY, December 7 – 10, 2011. You are sure to find great presentations, exhibits, network opportunities and special activities, including the celebrity auction. For more information contact Janie Blome ([jblome@aph.org](mailto:jblome@aph.org)) or Jane Thompson, [jthompson@aph.org](mailto:jthompson@aph.org).

### **New Downloadable Product Manuals Added**

Get the manual you need instantly! APH offers a selected list of product manuals available for free download ([www.aph.org/manuals/](http://www.aph.org/manuals/)). You may print or emboss these as needed. Newly added manuals include Tangle Toy (guidebook, large print), Tactile Treasures (guidebook, print), Basic Science Tactile Graphics (guidebook, large print), Sense of Science: Animals (guidebook, large print), Good Tactile Graphics (guidelines, resources, samples booklet), and Hands On (guidebook, print).

### **News From the Research World Scleral Lenses**

Scleral lenses have been around since the 1800s but back then they were made of blown glass, so they were uncomfortable and signs of corneal hypoxia could be seen in as little as 30 minutes. Not surprisingly, they fell out of use. But with the advent of new materials and technology, scleral lenses are increasing in popularity for those persons with corneal irregularities caused by ocular disease or trauma. Because the lens vaults up over the cornea, it will mask the corneal irregularity beneath and subsequently improve vision. Scleral lenses are used to treat keratoconus, in which the cornea gradually bulges to form a cone shape, blurring vision. The lenses require some time commitment from the patient because they are custom-made and require multiple appointments for fittings. Wearing lenses that aren't properly fitted carries risk of infection, corneal ulcer, impaired vision, and even blindness.

### **Infant Aphakia: Are Contact Lenses a Better Treatment?**

Clinical investigators at Duke Eye Center are helping solve a controversy in pediatric ophthalmology—whether a lens implant or contact lenses are best for babies after they have a cataract removed from just one eye (resulting in unilateral aphakia). A baby with a cataract removed from one eye is at high risk for amblyopia, which is more likely to develop when just one eye has an impaired focus. Implanting an intraocular lens immediately removes the need for parents to worry about contact lenses and glasses can be used instead. But an early implant has a drawback: the lens implant has a fixed focus power that does not change as the baby's eye grows. So if the proper implant power for the baby's eye is chosen, that eye will soon be very nearsighted. By contrast, if the implant power is estimated for what the adult eye will need, the baby's eye will be quite farsighted to begin with and will need glasses to make up the difference until the eye grows.

The Infant Aphakia Treatment Study is determining which treatment leads to better outcomes. Conducted at multiple centers, Duke's site has faculty surgeons Edward Buckley and Sharon Freedman participating. The study is ongoing, so the results are not conclusive, but

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preliminary results of one-year outcomes suggest that using a lens implant in babies isn't any better than using a contact lens and may cause more complications. "The jury is still out, but as a result of the findings so far, we are not recommending that lens implants be used in the first 6 months of life," Freedman says. (May 2010, *Archives of Ophthalmology*)

### **Retinal Implant Restores Some Sight to Blind: Researchers Say Implanted Microchip Allows 3 Patients to Recognize Some Shapes**

Three blind patients treated with an experimental eye implant were able to see shadows and shapes after getting the device, raising hopes that a highly anticipated new approach to treating blindness may be on the horizon. Eberhart Zrenner of Germany's University of Tubingen Eye Hospital says close to 30 research groups are working on retinal implants designed to restore sight to the blind; Zrenner's study is one of only two that have been tried in humans. The 3 patients included in the newly published report had gone blind as a result of hereditary retinal degeneration. Within days of having a tiny microchip surgically implanted, the two men and one woman could see shadows and were able to recognize some shapes. The microchip, which is slightly bigger than a sesame seed, includes 1500 light sensors connected to amplifiers and electrodes. The microchip is designed to sense light and, with the help of still functioning neurons in the retina, transmit light signals to the brain. The retinal implant allows patients to distinguish between highly contrasting light and dark images with the idea being that the brain can learn to interpret these lines and shapes into meaningful images. There is a two-year study going on that will include 25 to 50 patients. (*Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 10/3/10)

Another study, conducted by Second Sight Medical Products, is testing a different type of retinal implant that includes a camera and transmitter mounted on special eyeglasses. In the spring of 2009, the company announced that it had received FDA approval to implant its device in 20 people blinded by retinitis pigmentosa.

### **Federal Legislative Updates**

On October 8, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Communications and Video Accessibility Act. The new law requires smart phones, television programs, and other modern communications technologies to be accessible to people with visual impairment or hearing loss. The AFB influenced key provisions of the bill and worked closely with lawmakers and other organizations in the disability community to advocate for the bill, which received bipartisan support from Congress.

The new law requires mobile phone companies to make web browsers, text messaging, and email on smart phones fully accessible; restores and expands requirements for video description of television programs, in addition to requiring cable companies to make their program guides and selection menus accessible; ensures people with vision loss have access to emergency broadcast information; provides \$10 million in funding each year for assistive technology for deaf-blind individuals; and ensures that Internet-enabled mobile phones are compatible to hearing aids.

For more information contact Public Policy center, American Foundation for the Blind, 1660 L Street NW, Suite 513, Washington DC, 20036 or email [afbgov@afb.net](mailto:afbgov@afb.net). Web site is [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

### **Calendar of Events**

January 26 – 29, 2011: Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference and Exhibition, Orlando FL. Contact 312-321-5172 or email [info@atia.org](mailto:info@atia.org); web site [www.atia.org](http://www.atia.org)

March 10 – 12, 2011: Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute, Seattle WA. Contact Scott Truax, 646-206-2968 or email [struax@afb.net](mailto:struax@afb.net). Web site [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

July 3 – 8, 2011: National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind, Orlando FL. Contact 410-659-9314 or web site [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

July 8 – 16, 2011: American Council of the Blind 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention, Reno NV. Contact 202-467-5081 or web site [www.acb.org/conference/info2011.html](http://www.acb.org/conference/info2011.html)

### **REMEMBER THE DATES**

**March 26, 2011 Raising Cane 5K**

**April 8 – 9, 2011 NCCVIB**



Raising Cane Committee  
303 Ashe Avenue  
Raleigh NC 27606

Dear NCAER Members,

Children and adults with visual impairments are regularly excluded from mainstream events, including athletic competitions. The Raising Cane 5K Charity Race is kicking off its inaugural event on March 26, 2011, at the Dorothea Dix Campus in Raleigh, NC. The goal is to level the playing field for athletes of all skill levels. I invite you to join in this event !

The Raising Cane 5K Charity Race has two goals: 1) support and encourage athleticism in the visually impaired population of North Carolina and 2) raise funds to assist people with visual impairments.

Raising Cane's first mission is to encourage physical activity and competition for athletes with visual impairments; we at Raising Cane believe that competition should be available to everyone. Children and adults with visual impairments are regularly excluded from athletic events. The race is open to all community members and is tailored to the needs of athletes with visual impairments to encourage and support their participation. Athletes with visual impairments are being paired with volunteer sighted guides from the local running community. The hope is not only to provide this first event for athletes with visual impairments, but also to increase awareness of these athletes and develop enduring partnerships between them and their sighted peers.

Raising Cane's second mission is to raise funds to support the visually impaired community through runner registration fees, private donations, and corporate sponsorships. If you would like to sponsor this event, please contact Daniel Simmons at [Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com](mailto:Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com). Initial funds will be used to create the Raising Cane 5K event. Remaining monies will be split into three categories of support for the visually impaired community: the Dana Fox Children and Families Fund, Adult VI Services, and Education for Professionals Serving the Visually Impaired.

- The Dana Fox Children and Families Fund—Dana Fox was a teacher at The Governor Morehead Preschool and Board member of the NC Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCAER). Dana tirelessly served not only her students but also her students' families. She passed away at age 35 in October, 2010. These funds will assist children with visual impairments and their families through donations to The Governor Morehead Foundation, The Governor Morehead Outreach Program, The North Carolina Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NCAPVI), and North Carolina Parents of Blind Children, a division of the Nation Federation of the Blind of North Carolina.
- Adult VI Services—These funds assist adults with visual impairments through donations to NC Division of Services for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of NC.
- Education for Professionals Serving the Visually Impaired—The growing demand for visual impairments services far exceeds the availability of qualified professionals in the field. These funds will aid education and rehabilitation professionals in advanced coursework, research and

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development, and increase professional presentations at the annual NC Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness.

We are in the process of finalizing this race and making it an annual event. Raising Cane has followed the appropriate steps in making this an official sanctioned race. The course is measured and certified to be exactly 5 kilometers in length. FS Series, a timing company in Raleigh, will be using digital timing technology to provide each runner his or her official race time. In addition, we have applied for sanctioning from USA Track and Field; this sanctioning not only gives the race prestige and national recognition but also provides liability coverage. Raising Cane will also include a fun walk for those who want to support the cause but do not wish to run.

Raising Cane has gone live! Fleet Feet Sports in Raleigh believes that Raising Cane is a unique event and has made a commitment to support Raising Cane. Fleet Feet will help provide sighted guide volunteers, marketing, and prizes. The Raising Cane Committee is excited about this partnership.

The Raising Cane Committee invites you to come out and enjoy this event. We are calling all runners, walkers, and volunteers. We need volunteers to help with registration, sighted guide for runners and walkers, water stations, and directing runners/walkers on the course. If you would like to register for the run or walk, please go to [www.fsseries.com](http://www.fsseries.com). Raising Cane is listed under "Running Events."

Raising Cane's slogan is "You Guide, Eye Run: Together We Achieve!" The Raising Cane 5K Charity Race brings together all people for a common goal: to raise awareness and support the visually impaired community throughout North Carolina. Volunteers for this even are never turned away. If you are interested in volunteering or making a contribution, please contact Daniel Simmons at [Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com](mailto:Daniel.r.simmons@gmail.com). Thank you for your support and consideration. See you at the finish line !

Sincerely,  
Daniel R. Simmons  
Chairperson, Raising Cane 5K Charity Race