



**September, 2010**

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

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

By this time, many of you have adjusted to the new school year and are hopefully hitting a groove with your students and job. Of course, how many of us will feel that way come February, when the next break can't come soon enough? While it is only early in the fall, the NCCVIB planning committee is in full swing as we attempt to bring you another exciting and worthwhile conference. The conference theme is "Learn from the Past, Work for the Future." Though the conference will have a vocational rehabilitation flavor, it will also include sessions for those interested in early childhood, assistive technology, education, orientation & mobility, and low vision. We hope to present a wonderful guest speaker who is not only a patriot but also a great example of overcoming tremendous adversity. More information will be forthcoming as arrangements are finalized. North Carolina is a great state to be in the VI profession. We have many fine colleagues who have a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience. So if you find that you meet these conditions, please consider presenting at next spring's conference. For information on the conference and presenting as either a lecturer or vendor, check [www.ncaer.net](http://www.ncaer.net). The site will be updated frequently as the planning committee continues to make progress. As always, if you have any questions on the conference, contact the NCAER Chapter President-Elect and Chair of the NCCVIB planning committee, Daniel Simmons. Dan is at [Daniel.simmons@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Daniel.simmons@dhhs.nc.gov).

Here's to a wonderful, productive, and professionally satisfying year.

### ***Annual Meeting Updates***

During our annual meeting this past spring, the following new board members were installed.

- President: William Tubilleja
- President Elect: Daniel Simmons
- Past President: Kathy Davis

- Treasurer: Susan Purdy
- Secretary: Claire Hakin
- Members At Large: Dana Fox, Janet Barlow, Julie Kagy, Adam Woodrum

Together with the newly installed board members, NCAER is working with the planning committee for the NC Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness to put on another great conference April 8 – 9, 2011. Mr. Daniel Simmons is the planning committee chair and can be reached at [Daniel.simmons@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Daniel.simmons@dhhs.nc.gov) for more information on our conference.

The NC Chapter was actively involved during the summer, with assistance from NC NEA and the many friends of The Governor Morehead School K-12 program, Outreach, and Preschool Programs, lobbying through a contentious general assembly process. In the end, the school for the blind and its programs lost some staff due to cuts but gained hope for the future as the school will now be administered by the NC Department of Public Instruction and its Exceptional Children Division. This is seen as a positive move as the school feels better positioned under an administrative model that appears to be more responsive to the needs of the school and those of the greater state VI student population.

### ***Legislative Updates***

For those of you who were not in Raleigh during early to mid-summer for the short session of the legislature, several significant changes occurred which impact the governance of The Governor Morehead School for the Blind, Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf (Wilson), North Carolina School for the Deaf (Morganton), and the mental health schools under the auspices of the Office of Education Services, NC Department of Health and Human Services. Our NCAER President alluded to some of the rationale for the changes; however, specific highlights of Senate Bill 897 follow for your review:

- Consolidated functions of the School Directors and School Principals at the school for the blind and each of the schools for the deaf
- Eliminated several administrative positions within the school for the blind and schools for the deaf, including

principals, administrators, and assistant principals

- Sent administrative responsibility for the residential schools, Early Intervention Services—Preschool, Governor Morehead Preschool to the State Board of Education (SBE) effective June 1, 2011.
- Dissolved the Office of Education Services within the Department of Health and Human Services
- Designated the SBE in consultation with DHHS to develop and implement a transition plan that addresses structural adjustments; staffing and operating requirements; provision of services currently in place on the residential campuses; continuation of support services; and educational monitoring
- Appoint an Interim superintendent to oversee operations at the residential schools and programs no later than October 1, 2010
- Establish a search committee to hire a superintendent to oversee operations of the schools with the superintendent to assume oversight of the residential schools no later than June 1, 2011
- The Resource Support, DHHS VI Outreach, and Deaf/Blind statewide programs within the Office of Education Services are transferred to the Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division, effective October 1, 2010
- Reinstated the residential and instructional schedules for the schools which were in effect before February 8, 2010. Residential students shall have the opportunity to arrive at their respective schools on the evening of the day before commencement of academic instruction for the week
- Reinstated on-site summer school programming at these schools

Meetings between DPI and VI Outreach, Resource Support, and Deaf/Blind are underway as we plan for changes in these programs during our transition period. Please bear with the

programs while we work out details with our new administrative family.

Text of the full bill, S897, can be found at [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net) if you are interested in the specific verbiage which brought about these changes.

### ***Braille Challenge***

Start planning now for the 2011 Braille Challenge. The NC regional competition is Thursday, February 17, 2011. Braille readers in grades 1 – 12 in central and eastern NC are invited to The Governor Morehead School for the Blind campus. For more information about this specific event, or to volunteer to help with the event, contact Debbie Jackson, [dcj1115@bellsouth.net](mailto:dcj1115@bellsouth.net) or 919-821-3410. For general information about the National Braille Challenge, go to [www.brailleinstitute.org/braille\\_challenge.com](http://www.brailleinstitute.org/braille_challenge.com)

Registration deadline for students, forms, starting time, and other details about the Raleigh site will be coming out soon but you and your students can begin preparing NOW. As in previous years, a Challenge will also be held in western NC. Watch for details about that event as well.

### ***Short-Term Program at The Governor Morehead School***

While Outreach and Short-Term programs will be suspended for awhile, we are fortunate to be able to offer a program in September for elementary school. The short-term teachers of GMS Outreach are looking forward to the next session focusing on independent living skills, self-help skills, and personal safety skills for elementary students in grades 3 – 5. The session is designed to explore a wide variety of skills students with visual impairments may benefit from in a small group setting away from their home school. Classes will be centered on functional daily living tasks, as they occur throughout the student's day. Below are sample topics of instructional sessions: choosing your clothes for the day, including awareness of the weather and activities; organizing principles and strategies for your bedroom; folding clothes, matching socks, etc.; making a simple breakfast; organizing principles and strategies for your backpack/desk; personal safety skills for school and community; emergency plans, who do you ask for help;

where do you go for help in the community; money management, saving and spending; soliciting aid in a retail setting.

Additionally, students attending short-term sessions are expected to bring academic homework from the LEAs to remain current with their classmates as they attend the week-long program. Please contact the short-term staff at 1-800-532-3937 for more information.

**REMEMBER: The Outreach program will be moving from NC DHHS to NC DPI on October 1, 2010. Stay tuned for more information regarding resumption of short-term programs !**

### **Save the Date!**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual North Carolina Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness will be hosted at The Governor Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh on April 8 – 9. The theme for the 2011 NCCVIB is “Learn from the Past, Work for the Future.” The NCCVIB Planning Committee is hard at work putting together the conference. We are pleased to announce that Captain Ivan Castro will be the keynote speaker for the 2011 NCCVIB. Captain Castro was critically wounded in Iraq, and he lost his eyesight as a result of his wounds. After 17 months of rehabilitation, Captain Castro is stationed at Ft. Bragg and is the executive officer of the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group’s headquarters company. He is the only officer with visual impairments in the Special Forces. His story is inspiring, and we look forward to hearing his presentation. There will be more information forthcoming about a potential special event in connection with Captain Castro’s presentation.

### **New Journal**

The NFB Jernigan Institute announces the launch of the *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research (JBIR)*. The JBIR is a peer-reviewed research journal that will bring meaningful research into the mainstream of the blindness field. It will be available online free of charge. The main focus of the journal will be qualitative and quantitative research. There will also be sections for practice-based philosophical pieces. Check out [www.nfb-jbir.org](http://www.nfb-jbir.org) for registration.

### **Studies**

The Saxe Laboratory at MIT is studying how the brain develops in blind and sighted children. The researchers are seeking totally blind children between the ages of four and fourteen. During the study children will play games and listen to stories while noninvasive MRI images of the brain are taken. Children who participate will learn about neuroscience and will receive gift certificates and other small prizes. Out of state travel expenses for children and their families will be reimbursed. Contact Marina Bedny at 617-286-2341 or [mbedny@mit.edu](mailto:mbedny@mit.edu)

### **Doctoral Study**

The National Leadership Consortium in Sensory Disabilities (NLCSO), funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, is accepting applications to doctoral programs in the areas of blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hard of hearing, and deafblindness. Full tuition and a minimum of \$20,000 annual living stipend will be provided to NLCSO fellows for up to four years of full-time, on-campus study while they earn their doctorates at any of twenty-five consortium universities. Applications for the cohort beginning in Fall, 2011, must be received by December 31, 2010. Applicants will be notified by March 15, 2011. Contact Tina Fitzpatrick at 215-780-1501 or [www.salus.edu/nlcsd/application.html](http://www.salus.edu/nlcsd/application.html)

### **Upcoming Professional Development for those in the VI field in North Carolina**

The National Braille Association Professional Development Conference will be held in Raleigh, October 7-9, at the Embassy Suites Raleigh-Durham Airport/Brier Creek. This fall’s Professional Development Conference will take place over three days. This conference offers two courses, both intensely focused on a particular area of Braille transcription:  
1) Braille Formats: All About All the Rules  
2) Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics  
For more information go to [www.nationalbraille.org](http://www.nationalbraille.org)

The Vision Institute at the Exceptional Children Conference in Greensboro will be November 2 and 3, Tuesday from 1-4 and Wednesday from 8:30-4. Our presenter will be LaRhea Sanford from the American Printing

House for the Blind, the developer of the current FVLMA Protocol published by APH. Watch the NCVI Listserve for more information and the link to registration when it is available.

Lastly, the AT EXPO will be at the North Raleigh Hilton November 17, 18 and 19, 2010. There will be many sessions and vendors of interest at the EXPO. Of special interest will be the Pre-Conference Session with representatives from Bookshare. This will be an in-depth presentation about the use of Bookshare.org which provides free, downloadable files for accessible books for those with print disabilities. For more information and registration go to: [www.pat.org/index.php/at\\_expo/year/two\\_thousand\\_ten/](http://www.pat.org/index.php/at_expo/year/two_thousand_ten/)

### **Looking for Toys???**

Do you work with young children? Do you need ideas for toys that stimulate development? First of all, don't ignore that your youngsters need to learn activities such as painting, coloring, drawing because these are common activities among their peers. Activities such as painting may be adapted for tactual sense by adding sand to the paint. But the most important influences in the child's development are parents and the environment. Parents (and teachers) are the greatest toys around: faces, voices, hands. Play is as important as food, sleep, and love.

But back to the need for toys: Look around. Toys are *everywhere*. Please make sure that you use household and inexpensive materials carefully as they are not made according to federal safety guidelines. Here are some suggestions:

*Cardboard tubes* to look through, blow through, sing/talk through, bang for sound, roll, or use as monoculars.

*Boxes* for hiding special toys, stacking, nesting, introducing concept discrimination and classification (sorting and storing) and for filling with a variety of tactile media (water, sand, rice, macaroni, Styrofoam "peanuts", dry/wet oatmeal).

*Larger boxes* for playhouses, learning centers.

*Paper bags* for costumes, hand puppets, "shoes", inflated and/or stuffed with newspaper for kick ball or "baseball".

*Towels, scarves, blankets* for hiding toys, playing peek-a-boo, crawl-through tents, wrapping and cuddling.

*Push toys*, like doll buggies, push wagons, play grocery carts give your kids an opportunity to explore their world by providing motivation for functional movement.

*Tinfoil plates, shiny measuring spoons, ribbons, fabric scraps, cellophane, wax paper, aluminum foil, pots and pans* provide visual and auditory stimulation....the list goes on !

These are just some general ideas of uses for items readily found around your house/your office which can be used (with a little imagination and a little safety) for great learning experiences for your kids !

### **DID YOU KNOW ...?**

.....that there is an organization in NC that is solely dedicated to making people aware of the necessity of learning to read and write Braille for people who are blind and for many who are visually impaired, and advocating for the production, availability, and use of Braille. That organization is the *NC Braille Literacy Council (BLC)*.

Several years ago representatives from various public and private organizations and agencies involved in blindness work came together to focus specifically on the issue of Braille. Today that group continues to work together with representatives from the NC ACB and NFB organizations, GMS and public school teachers, the state Department of Public Instruction and Division of Services for the Blind, Friends of the Library and the NC Library for the Blind, NCCU TVI Training Program, AER and others.

The BLC sponsors the Braille Challenge regional competitions in NC each year, has sponsored Braille Read-ins, and provided information about Braille and the goals of the BLC at numerous conferences and through various publications. Our audience is broad ranging from parents of students with vision loss to prospective teachers of the visually impaired. The limited number of teachers who are trained to instruct students in Braille combined with the ever-increasing reliance on audio formats causes us great concern as to whether current and future generations will be prepared to achieve the level of independence that many of us have experienced with good Braille reading

and writing skills at the foundation of that success.

This means that the BLC and we, as professionals in the field of blindness, must work together and tirelessly to reach those who need to know and teach those who need to learn! If you want more information about the BLC please visit the web site [www.ncbrailleliteracy.org](http://www.ncbrailleliteracy.org) We welcome ideas and volunteers. You may contact co-chairs of the BLC, Kathryn Flynn, GMS Outreach Program, [keflynn@gmail.com](mailto:keflynn@gmail.com) or Debbie Jackson, [dcj1115@bellsouth.net](mailto:dcj1115@bellsouth.net) (Debbie Jackson)

### ***Vision News (Prevent Blindness America)***

Of the 2.5 million eye injuries that occur annually, almost half of these happen at home. According to the most recent data from the Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the American Society of Ocular Trauma (ASOT), more than 30 percent of all home eye injuries required emergency room care. And, the AAO states that eye injury is one of the leading causes of visual impairment in the US. Fortunately, 90 percent of all eye injuries can be prevented by using protective eyewear. Prevent Blindness America has declared September as Home Eye Safety Awareness Month in an effort to educate the public on the importance of eye protection in the home.

When starting any project, PBA urges everyone to wear eyewear approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The eyewear should have the "Z-87" logo stamped on the frames and can be purchased at hardware stores and home building centers.

Knowing what to do for any eye emergency can save valuable time and possibly prevent vision loss. Basic eye injury first aid instructions include the following:

***Chemical Burns to the Eye:*** Immediately flush with water or any other drinkable liquid; flush for at least 15 minutes; do not use an eyecup and do not bandage the eye; seek medical attention.

***Specks in the Eye:*** Do not rub the eye; let tears wash the speck out or use an eyewash; try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid; if the speck does not wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage it lightly, and see a doctor.

***Blows to the Eye:*** Apply a cold compress without putting pressure on the eye; seek medical care.

More information is available at Prevent Blindness America, 1-800-331-2020.

### ***Parents of Visually Impaired Kiddos....***

If you are like most professionals in the field, eventually you get the questions from parents: Are there other folks like me? Are there other parents who have kids with VI? Where do I turn for help? Did you know that NC has a chapter of the National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairment? NC-APVI is a non-profit, independent organization that enables parents to find information and resources for their children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities. NC-APVI is dedicated to giving emotional support, parent education, initiating outreach programs, networking, and advocating for the educational needs and welfare of children who are blind or visually impaired

You can find out more about this local group at <http://www.nc-apvi.org>. You can also contact Jennifer Strickland, President, in Raleigh at 919-266-6119 or [jcar382600@aol.com](mailto:jcar382600@aol.com)

**REMEMBER: The NCCVIB is April 8 -9, 2011, The Governor Morehead School for the Blind. "Learn From the Past, Work for the Future" [www.ncaer.net](http://www.ncaer.net) for additional information and forms.**

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***Something to think about....***"When they discover the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to discover they are not it." (Bernard Bailey)

*"What you don't see with your eye, don't invent with your mouth." (Jewish Proverb)*

And finally....

*Praise youth and it will prosper (Irish Proverb)*