

C O N S U L T A N T S' O R N E R



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Editor: Riki Nitz



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Change Is In The Air!

Not only the organizational structure of SDSBVI, but also the physical structure of the SDSBVI building itself will be undergoing significant changes during this school year.

Read more about these changes, as well as other articles of interest, within the pages of this newsletter.

WELCOME JULIE!

We welcome Julie Van Dover as she joins the Outreach Vision Consultant staff. Julie, who has taught at the SDSBVI for the past eleven years, will leave her classroom to become the Vision Consultant for eastern South Dakota. In addition to being a teacher of the visually impaired, Julie is also nationally certified in low vision. Marva Gellhaus, who has been in this position the past three years, has accepted the position as the Low Vision Therapist for our School. (Page 2)

We are looking forward to working with Julie. As with any new job, time is needed to "learn the ropes." Your patience is appreciated as she transitions into this new position.

APH Educational Materials

<http://www.aph.org>

Developmental Guidelines for Infants with Visual Impairment: A Manual for Early Intervention

The *Developmental Guidelines for Infants with Visual Impairment* manual describes the development of infants (Birth to 2 years of age) with a wide range of visual impairments. It is primarily for professionals and includes sections in the following areas:

- Visual Impairment in Infants (overview)
- Development—Social-Emotional, Communication, Cognitive, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, and Functional Vision
- Use of the Guidelines to Develop Intervention Goals and Strategies

This product is available from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for purchase and can also be borrowed from your area Outreach Vision Consultant. For more information on this product or other APH products, please contact your area Outreach Vision Consultant.

A copy of “Developmental Guidelines for Infants with Visual Impairment” has been mailed to each service provider with the SD Birth to Three program—courtesy of the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Educational Programs and Services Study

The SD Board of Regents approved a study of the educational programs and services for students with visual impairments in SD. The work will be lead by Dr. Phil Hatlen, a nationally recognized expert in working with children with vision loss. He will be joined by Susan LaVenture, the Executive Director of the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments. They will work with a Task Force representing parents, educators, and other service providers to gather information. The goal is to determine what is working well and what improvements can be made to ensure all students with vision loss have access to appropriate programs and services from birth to age 21.

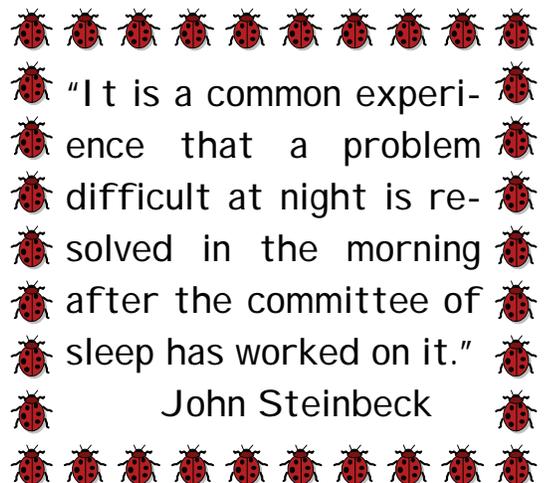
The first Task Force meeting will be September 21 in Pierre. The study will continue through the fall with a final meeting of the Task Force in December. Dr. Hatlen will provide his recommendations to the SD Board of Regents.

Expansion of Services

Welcome Marva!

The SDSBVI is expanding its services in the area of low vision. This first semester will be a transition time for us as we launch this new service.

Dr. Marva Gellhaus has been appointed as Low Vision Specialist. In this role, she will assist students, families, and teachers in implementing the recommendations of the eye care professionals. She will help parents, teachers, and students understand visual needs and appropriate modifications. She will train students in the use of prescribed low vision devices.

 "It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it."
John Steinbeck

Aberdeen Area Family Support Group

The Family Support Group for families in Aberdeen and the surrounding area who have children with visual impairments continues to meet and grow. Meetings in May and June focused on the Expanded Core Curriculum and Orientation and Mobility Skills. In August, eleven families, for a total of more than 45 individuals, enjoyed a fun night out at the new aquatic center in Aberdeen. The shelter at the pool was rented and pizza and ice cream were provided. Not only were the food and water activities great, but the families also had a wonderful time interacting and networking with each other.

Various activities to connect families in the Aberdeen area and help them gain knowledge and support regarding their child's visual impairment and issues related to blindness and visual impairments will continue throughout the year. If you are interested in joining this group of parents, call Amy Scepaniak at 626-2580 or email her at scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu.



Aberdeen Area Family Support Group— September Meeting

Susan LaVenture, Executive Director of the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) will be the guest speaker. Susan is from Massachusetts and will be in South Dakota to participate in a study of the educational programs and services for students with visual impairments in SD.

She will meet and visit with parents at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 22, 2007, with food and refreshments to follow at 5:30 p.m. Child care will be provided.

All parents in South Dakota who have children with visual impairments are invited to attend this event. To register, call Amy at 626-2580 or email at scepania@sdsbvi.northern.edu.

Families Connecting with Families Conference

Kids enjoyed a chocolate fountain, petting puppies, feeling elephant skin, and meeting other kids with vision loss at the Second National Family Conference in Omaha in July.

Twelve families from South Dakota were a part of a group of 700 attendees who spent the weekend learning from each other and from various professionals. While the parents were attending seminars, the children were enjoying numerous activities, including a trip to the Omaha Zoo.

Major sponsors were The American Foundation for the Blind, The Seeing Eye, Hadley School for the Blind, and the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments. The SD Foundation for the Blind and Visually Impaired and a grant from the Sioux Falls Downtown Lions made scholarships available to SD parents.

SDSBVI LIBRARY INFORMATION

Available Formats:

Books on Tape

Braille Books

Large Print Books

Print/Braille Books

Regular Print Books

Tactile Books

Descriptive Videos

Regular VHS Videos

Braille Magazines



To Purchase Braille and Print/Braille Books:

Seedlings (www.seedlings.org)

National Braille Press (www.nbp.org)

American Printing House for the Blind (www.aph.org)

To Purchase Descriptive Videos:

Descriptive Video Service (www.wgbh.org)

For More Information, Contact:

Pat Geditz, Librarian (626-2675 or geditzp@sdsbvi.northern.edu)

Books Featuring Characters with Blindness and Visual Impairment

Looking Out for Sarah by Glenna Lang

Pre-school—grade 3

Sarah's guide dog, Perry, shares details of their daily lives from his point of view.

Glasses, Who Needs `Em? by Lane Smith

Grades 3-6

A boy is unhappy about having to wear glasses until his doctor provides an imaginative list of well-adjusted eyeglass wearers.

Half the Battle by Lynn Hall

Grades 7-12

Jealous of the attention that has always been focused on his brother who is blind, Loren takes drastic action to achieve recognition when the teenagers enter an endurance horseback ride.

Parent Tips for Reading to Your Child

- Start today. It's best to start reading to your child early and often, but it's never too late to begin.
- With younger children, it is very important to read and re-read books that are predictable and contain repetitions.
- During repeat reading of a predictable book, occasionally stop at one of the key words or phrases and allow your child to provide the word.
- Start with picture books and build to storybooks and chapter books. Don't forget other reading materials like magazines, newspapers, comic books, and cookbooks. It's important for your child to learn that we read for real reasons and for fun.
- Read with your child at least once each day.
- Find a quiet, well-lit place, without interruptions for this shared experience.

(Prepared by Miss Mehlhaff, 1st grade teacher, May Overby Elementary School, Aberdeen Public Schools)



THE HADLEY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Family Education Program

- ✦ Offers courses of interest to parents of blind children and family members of blind adults.
- ✦ Focuses on independent living, technology, advocacy and adjustment to blindness issues.
- ✦ Topics include child development, independent living and braille instruction.
- ✦ All courses in this program feature an Family Education designation at the conclusion of the course description.

Who Can Enroll?

- ✦ You are a parent or grandparent of a blind or severely visually impaired child or
- ✦ You are a spouse, adult daughter or son, or adult sibling of a blind or severely visually impaired adult and
- ✦ You can understand courses written in English at the high school level

Why Enroll?

- ✦ Learn to read and write braille.
- ✦ Foster the development of a child with a visual impairment.
- ✦ Support your family member's adjustment to vision loss.

Not sure if you are eligible to enroll?

Please call or email Student Services or send an enrollment application, so that we can evaluate your eligibility. See contact information below.

The following list includes Family Education course names. Please visit Hadley website to learn more about each course.

Early Childhood & Elementary Years

Finding Your Way

Parenting Children with Multiple Disabilities

Social Skills: Foundation

Social Skills: Elementary Years

Using Raised Markers

Contracted Braille

Accessing Local Sports & Recreation Programs

Abacus 1

The Human Eye

Access Technology: Beginnings

Self-Help Groups: An Introduction

Diabetes: Toward Self Management

Glaucoma

Contracted Braille Diagnostic Test

Early Independence

Learning Through Play

Raising Responsible Children

Social Skills: Preschool Years

Braille

Introduction to Braille

Basic Nemeth Code

Independent Living

Abacus 2

Introduction to Low Vision

Self-Esteem and Adjusting with Blindness

Self-Help Groups: Advanced Topics

Macular Degeneration

Diagnostics (No Credit)

The Hadley School for the Blind

700 Elm Street

Winnetka IL 60093-2554

847-446-8111

1-800-323-4238

Fax: 847-446-0855

info@hadley.edu

www.hadley-school.org

SLATE PALS

A Pen Pal Program for Blind Youth

Pen pal programs are lots of fun. They help students find new friends all over the country, sometimes all over the world. Pen pal programs take applications from students and use them to find pen pal matches. After a match is made, the student gets the name and address of their new pen pal. It is then up to the students to begin writing letters to each other.

Slate Pals is a pen pal program for students in grades K-12 who want to write Braille letters to other students. It is called a Slate Pal program because slates are a handy, cheap, and easy way of writing Braille, just as pens are a handy, cheap, and easy way of writing print.

All kinds of kids of all ages sign up for the Slate Pal program. Sometimes blind kids from foreign countries want a Slate Pal. Sometimes sighted kids who want to learn Braille write and ask for a blind Slate Pal. But most of the kids are kids who just want to write to someone their own age. It's especially neat to write letters (and get letters) in Braille. It's also great to have someone to talk to about things that only another blind kid can understand.

In matching Slate Pals, the primary considerations are age range, gender preference, and interests. The program also tries to match each prospective Slate Pal with someone who lives in a distinctly different geographical locale.

Slate Pals is sponsored by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and is available, free of charge, to children around the world.

For more information, contact:

Debbie Kent Stein
5817 N Nina Ave
Chicago IL 60631
773-631-1093

dkent5817@att.net

To register online, go to www.nfb.org

STUDENT CORNER

Poem by LeAnne Wurtz

*God Made
The Stars
That Shine
So Bright
They Twinkle
So Bright
They Shine
In the Night*



LeAnne is a 3rd Grade student at Brentwood Colony School in Faulkton SD, and we thank her for her contribution.

We welcome any and all special presentations, awards, writings, etc. achieved by our outreach students. If your student/child has such a contribution and would like to be featured in our Student Corner, please contact

STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

USE TIME WISELY
LAUGH AT YOURSELF
TEACH A KID TO FLY A KITE
TALK LESS
PREPARE FOR MORNING THE NIGHT BEFORE
EAT A BALANCED DIET
KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS POSITIVE
CHERISH THOSE YOU LOVE
CHERISH YOURSELF

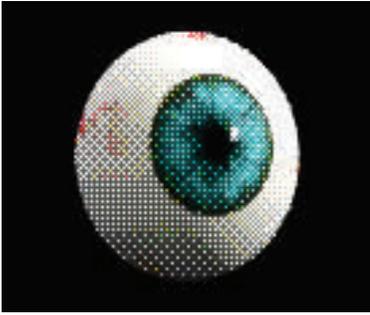


Answers to Eyeglasses "Eye-Q" Quiz

1. a
2. b
3. a

FOCUS ON THE EYE

RETINOBLASTOMA



Description

Retinoblastoma (reh-tin-oh-blast-oma) is a childhood cancer arising from immature retinal cells in one or both eyes and can strike a child from the time he/she is in the womb up to 5 years of age. This cancer is curable if caught early enough. A cure, however, may require aggressive treatment and even removal of the eye in order to be successful. If the cancer has spread beyond the eye, the likelihood of a cure is lower and depends on how the tumor has spread. Spread of the tumor to the brain or other locations can occur.

Retinoblastoma is a relatively uncommon tumor of childhood that accounts for about 3% of the cancers in children under the age of 15. The tumors originate in the retina, the light sensitive layer of the eye, which enables the eye to see. When the tumors are present in one eye, it is referred to as unilateral retinoblastoma, and when it occurs in both eyes, it is referred to as bilateral retinoblastoma. 60% of the cases involve only one eye (unilateral); the rest affect both eyes (bilateral). 90% of retinoblastoma patients have no family history of the disease and only 10% of newly diagnosed patients have other family members with retinoblastoma.

Early diagnosis and intervention is critical to the successful treatment of this disease. Genetic counseling can help families understand the risk of retinoblastoma. It is especially important when more than one family member has had the disease, or if the retinoblastoma occurs in both eyes.

Signs/Symptoms

- White "glow" or "glint" in the pupil of one or both eyes in dim lighting
- A white glow in the eye that is often seen in photographs taken with a flash; instead of the typical "red eye" from the flash
- Pupil may appear white or distorted
- Crossed or misaligned eyes
- A red, painful eye
- Poor vision
- The iris may be a different color in each eye
- Cataract can develop from the treatment

If you notice this white glow in any of your children's photos, please contact your pediatrician or ophthalmologist immediately and have their eyes examined. Request pupil dilation of both eyes. If your physician is unable or unwilling to do the pupil dilation, please insist on a referral.

Diagnosis/Treatment

An examination of the eye is done with dilation of the pupil, CT or MRI study of the head, and ultrasound of the eye (head and eye echoencephalogram).

Treatment options depend upon the size and location of the tumor. Small tumors may be treated by laser surgery. Radiation and chemotherapy may be needed if the tumor has spread beyond the eye. The eye may need to be removed if the tumor does not respond to other treatments. It is important to seek treatment from a physician with experience treating this rare type of tumor.

Educational Implications

- Child may function as a one-eyed person and not need services for the visually impaired
- Preferential seating
- Magnification (including large print)

Sources

<http://www.retinoblastoma.com/frame1.htm>

<http://www.tsbvi.edu/Education/anomalies/Retinoblastoma.htm>

<http://www.retinoblastoma.net>

<http://www.instituteforfamilies.org>



“Breaking News”
 May 21, 2007. . .
 During the last week of school, a delivery truck hit the front canopy of the school. Fortunately, no one was in the entrance or staff work area and no one was injured. Repair work is in progress—we’ll keep you posted as this facelift continues.

BEFORE



AFTER



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