

# SERVICE TO THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED



## VISIONS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2015

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### **Director's Comments by Gaye Mattke**

A lot has happened since the last VISIONS newsletter. Proposed rules for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act have been published and are currently in a comment period prior to finalization. This law reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act and implements a number of changes in the way we do business. In addition, we've had a number of changes in personnel in SBVI. It's difficult to see experienced employees move on, but we're excited for the opportunity for fresh ideas with new staff coming on board. New members have been appointed to the Board of SBVI, replacing others whose terms have expired. I'm sure most of you will recognize the names of those appointed. See more information on these topics later in this edition of VISIONS.

As summer winds down, we are looking forward to a fall tradition, meeting with our friends from the South Dakota Association of the Blind September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in Pierre. We're also looking forward to a variety of events in October recognizing Disability Employment Awareness Month. See announcements at the end of this publication to learn about other events coming in the next few months. We are always looking for ideas for the VISIONS newsletter. Let us know if you have ideas for stories or announcements for the next VISIONS coming this winter.

## **Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired Update**

Join us in welcoming new members who were recently appointed to the Board of SBVI. Catherine Greseth was appointed to replace Dr. Karla Bucknall; Koni Sims was appointed to replace Linda Biffert; Kay Miller was appointed to replace Marilyn Steffen; and Marcia Hultman was appointed to replace Bill Molseed. In addition Lyle Cook and Eric Rippentrop were re-appointed to serve another three year term. We sincerely appreciate the service of citizens who volunteer to serve on the Board. Their input is invaluable due to their expertise and experiences, both professional and personal. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the service of outgoing Board members whose time on the board assisted us to improve services delivered by SBVI.

## **Assistive Technology Access Training (ATAP)**

This short term training opportunity provides instruction to use built-in accessibility options for personal computers or mobile devices. Adults and high school students with low vision or who are blind are eligible for the free individualized training with up to five hours of instruction per program participant. The intent of SBVI's access-training project is to help people with vision loss maximize their ability to use their mobile devices and computers.

Forty-four individuals have been referred to the program. Final reports have been received on thirty individuals whose training is completed. Twenty-three consumer satisfaction surveys have been completed to date by DakotaLink staff. In addition to asking the participant general questions about the computer, iPad or iPhone training they received, the survey includes an opportunity for the individual to request additional 3 hours of training. Of the twenty-four people who have completed their satisfaction surveys, 90% of the ATAP consumers are asking for more training which has resulted in a high level of training activities for the technicians with DakotaLink.

## **SBVI Staff Updates**

Steve Kelsey resigned from his position as the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Aberdeen District office as he accepted the Transition Specialist position at the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Aberdeen. Mike Webb has been selected to fill the vacant Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position. Mike brings over 17 years of experience working in the Human Service field which has provided him a strong knowledge base of the supports and services available within the statewide delivery system.

Tricia Watson accepted the Rehabilitation Teacher position, previously held by Mike Webb, effective August 24<sup>th</sup>. Tricia is currently employed with the Department of Human Services at the South Dakota Developmental Center as a Direct Support Professional. She works closely with men and women, supporting them and teaching activities of daily living in order to maximize their independence. She has experience with a variety of computer technology and contributes to the development of

individualized service plans created for persons supported. As an employee of SDDC, she has participated in Person Centered Planning training and is interested in learning more in this area.

After fifteen years of employment with Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired as a Rehabilitation Teacher, Mary Milne resigned effective August 8th. Mary has been a dedicated employee with SBVI and was instrumental in helping many individuals achieve their independent living goals while covering a large territory in western South Dakota. We offer Mary our congratulations on her retirement and wish her well in the future.

Heather Shelatz recently accepted the Rapid City Rehabilitation Teacher position. Heather was most recently employed at Black Hills Works (BHW) where she was a Direct Support Professional and Service Coordinator. She has experience with a variety of computer technology, writing plans and facilitating meetings for the individuals served by BHW. She has participated in Person Centered Planning training and has experience teaching independent living skills. Heather will start on August 17th and she will begin with skills of blindness and low vision training at the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind on August 24th.

Jennifer Geffre is the new Orientation and Mobility Specialist at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. She started her position early in July, but found her love for orientation and mobility in the two previous summers that she interned at the center. Jennifer graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN with a BA in Psychological Science and a minor in music. Raised in South Dakota, she is excited to be back in her home state.

Melanie Dumdei is the new Senior Secretary at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. She began working in mid-February after graduating from college. Melanie attended Truman State University in Kirksville, MO and graduated with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. Born and raised in Sioux Falls, Melanie decided to return to her hometown to pursue work after her time in Missouri.

### **Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired Public Gatherings**

SBVI, in conjunction with the Board of SBVI, holds public forums annually to solicit input on the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation as required by federal regulations. Meetings for 2015 were planned prior to the Rehabilitation Services Administration announcement that a state plan will not be required until March 3, 2016. These meetings will meet the requirements of public input for the unified state plan required by WIOA that is due on March 3, 2016 due to discussion related to implementation of stipulations in WIOA.

A public gathering was held on April 28th in conjunction with the Board of SBVI, Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Sinte Gleska College in Mission to share information and obtain input on services for people with disabilities. State and Tribal programs shared information with local residents. Gloria Pearson, Secretary of the

Department of Human Services, participated in the gathering along with representatives from SBVI and the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

A Dakota Digital Network (DDN) meeting was held on April 30<sup>th</sup> with sites in Aberdeen, Pierre and Sioux Falls. Fourteen people attended and discussed assistive technology training and the need for unlimited 1:1 training for all citizens with vision loss. It was also suggested that a comprehensive ad campaign be developed (similar to the employment focused outreach developed by SBVI in the past) to inform all citizens with vision loss about the availability of assistive technology devices and training. In addition, the timelines and impact of provisions in WIOA were discussed with those attending the DDN meeting.

The National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota hosted a public forum on May 1<sup>st</sup> in Rapid City in conjunction with their annual convention. The main topic of discussion was the impact of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act with the twenty plus individuals who attended the meeting.

### **2015 Governor's Awards**

Governor's Awards recognize the achievements of employers, individuals with disabilities and other South Dakotans for their contributions towards the rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities. Governor Dennis Daugaard will present the awards at the State Capitol Rotunda on Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> in Pierre. Congratulations to the following 2015 award recipients:

Outstanding Citizen with a Disability: Thore Jenshus, Rapid City  
Outstanding Employee with a Disability: Michael Tieszen, Watertown  
Outstanding Private Employer (Small Employer): Slumberland Furniture, Pierre  
Outstanding Private Employer (Large Employer): Target, Sioux Falls (East)  
Outstanding Transition Services: Clark School District, Clark  
Distinguished Service: Don Kinneberg, Florence

### **'My Disability Is One Part of Who I Am'**

#### **2015 Theme for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Planning for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2015 is underway, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy announced the official theme for the October observance: "My Disability Is One Part of Who I Am."

"This year's theme encapsulates the important message that people with disabilities are just that — people," said Jennifer Sheehy, acting assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "And like all people, we are the sum of many parts, including our work experiences. Disability is an important perspective we bring to the table, but, of course, it's not the only one."

National Disability Employment Awareness Month, known as NDEAM is a nationwide campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities, past and present. The year's

theme is announced to help workplaces, individuals and communities begin planning activities. Watch for announcements of activities in communities around South Dakota coming up during the month of October!

### **SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind Transition Week 2015**

Six boys and one girl, all around the age of 16, took part in this year's Transition Week, held at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls on June 14<sup>th</sup> through the 18th. The kickoff was a presentation by Joe Strechay, Program Manager of CareerConnect with American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), who spoke to the students about having confidence, marketing one's skills, setting and achieving goals, and making connections to get jobs.

Students attended Skills of Blindness classes where they learned about the latest in assistive technology and adaptive sports, prepared a meal, and completed a project in home mechanics. Students also participated in a community service activity, making "Dipped Bones" to donate to the Sioux Falls Humane Society, and gained independent living skills throughout the week by managing money for food and activities, staying in the dorms at Augustana College, and using public transportation.

There was plenty of time for play, as well. During the week, students took trips to Wild Water West and Buffalo Wild Wings, met up with a local Boy Scout troop and learned how to tie knots and throw tomahawks, and enjoyed a descriptive movie, all while having fun with peers.

Students also participated in Person Centered Thinking activities throughout the week, developing their "One Page Profiles." Transition Week concluded with a breakfast in which the students shared their profiles with SBVI board members, staff, and SDRC students. This was an opportunity for students to talk about themselves and to share their experiences with people they did not know. Both staff and students had a great time and we are all looking forward to Transition Week 2016!

### **New Vendor Operators in the Business Enterprise Program**

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) has 2 new vendor operators. Richard Jangula began operation of Kneip Coffee House and Vending in Pierre, effective June 1st. Richard relocated from Bismarck, North Dakota to be trained and then was offered a location with BEP. Richard has made it a point to offer fresh fruits and vegetables each day, as well as varying the entrée choices at lunch. BEP and Richard are participating in the Department of Health's Healthy Vending Project at selected vending locations to pilot healthier products in vending machines.

Ismael Collazo (Izzy) opened the Earth to Orbit Café on July 20<sup>th</sup> at the EROS Data Center near Sioux Falls. Izzy has a degree in culinary arts, and moved to South Dakota from Florida. The employees at EROS Data Center are excited to have the cafeteria open again and state that Izzy's food is delicious.

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Services for Students & Youth with Disabilities**

The WIOA includes a number of references that impact the way services are delivered to transition aged students. The Act also stipulates that funding specifically be used for pre-employment transition services (PETS). The state must reserve not less than 15 percent of the allotted vocational rehabilitation (Title IV) funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services for youth with disabilities. Pre-employment transition services must be provided in collaboration with local educational agencies and must include:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences in an integrated environment;
- Post-secondary education counseling;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy.

Coordination must be developed with the local workforce development boards and American Job Centers to create work opportunities for students with disabilities including internships, summer employment, and apprenticeships. The state plan must provide an assurance that the State will develop and implement strategies to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis. This does not reduce the obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities within the State.

South Dakota SBVI has a number of initiatives that meet the PETS requirements but will need to implement ways to track time and resources spent on these services. We will also need to find new, innovative ways to expand access to PETS for students with vision loss.

### **The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)**

NLS is a free library program of braille and talking books and magazines circulated to enrolled patrons who are blind, or who have a visual impairment or physical disability that prevents them from reading or using regular print materials. Through its accessible offerings, NLS patrons can experience a life with books. For more information about NLS, visit the That All May Read website and “like” the Facebook page, and spread the word so that all may read. Visit their web site at:

<http://www.loc.gov/programs/national-library-service-for-the-blind-and-physically-handicapped/about-this-service/>

## **Books from National Braille Press**

The following are books available from the National Braille Press.

<http://www.nbp.org/downloads/summerpicks2015.pdf> or Call toll-free 800-548-7323

**Getting Started with the iPhone and iOS 8: Step-by-Step Instructions for Blind Users:** Anna Dresner’s soup-to-nuts tutorial for beginners contains everything you need to get started using the iPhone and iOS 8. You’ll appreciate this detailed guide for setting up your phone, loading and backing up music and contacts, placing calls, entering text, using a Bluetooth keyboard and braille display, and more. And the appendix lists every gesture and button on the phone!  
Braille (3 vols.), BRF, Word, ASCII text, DAISY and ePub: \$24

### **iFeelaGrams: Tactile Screenshots for iPad and iOS8**

Discover “what” appears “where” on the your iPad using these 28 tactile screen shots—from the buttons and camera lenses to the iPad home screen apps, settings, contacts, iBooks, and iTunes and more. Explore diagrams with one hand while swiping through screen elements with the other—learn in minutes what might otherwise take hours! UEB Braille and 28 Raised Line Diagrams (1 vol.): \$25

### **Out and About: Our Favorite iOS Travel Apps**

Whether you are traveling to the grocery store or to Paris to pick up a baguette, Judy Dixon and Doug Wakefield help you get there quicker with this handy guide to their favorite iPhone travel apps. Braille (1 small vol.), BRF, Word, DAISY: \$9

### **Words to Live By ...**

The newest addition to our print/braille magnet collection features a quote that speaks to what the world needs right now: “When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.” - Buddha. Our assortment of colorful magnets make great graduation, birthday, or any-occasion gifts. Check out all of our magnets at [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org) (enter “magnet” in the search field). Print / braille refrigerator magnets: \$5 each (includes shipping)

### **Cook with a MasterChef!**

Millions of viewers watched Christine Ha, who is blind, sweep the Season 3 finale of MasterChef. Now you too can cook with Christine, using her adaptive techniques, to turn out delicious dishes. Wrote one reviewer, “People expecting some fancy Asian food will be disappointed. The recipes are simple, using simple ingredients, but they taste wonderful!” We sold out of the first printing, so don’t miss the second one!  
Braille (3 vols.) or BRF: \$23.99 (same price as print book)

### **Healthy Frozen Meals: Cooking Directions & Nutritional Values**

Did you know the average American eats six convenience foods daily? NBP tested 30 of the healthiest meal choices from Lean Cuisine, Healthy Choice, Amy’s, and Weight Watchers’ Smart Ones and brailled them in one volume, with cooking instructions and nutritional values. Keep some healthy meals in the freezer for when you don’t have time to make a meal from scratch! Braille (1 vol.) BRF: \$10

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## Announcements

- Person Centered Training in Rapid City Sept. 1-2
  - Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities – Sept. 3, Pierre
  - Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired Meeting - Sept. 18, Pierre
  - State Independent Living Council - Sept. 24, Pierre
  - South Dakota Association of the Blind Convention – Sept. 25-26, Pierre
  - Fall Conference October 13 – 15, Sioux Falls
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Contact us toll free at 1-800-265-9684 or (605) 773-4644

Visit our web site at: <http://dhs.sd.gov/sbvi/>