

Fall 2014

North Dakota Dual Sensory Project

D-B Informer

www.nd.gov/deafblind/ 1-701-239-7376

BRAVO EDEN!! BRAVO!!



“Why wouldn’t I do it?” This has been the attitude of a teenage girl, who was born with CHARGE Syndrome, since she was able to walk and talk at the age of 2. West Fargo Sophomore, Eden Neva, learned that her mother was signing up for the Younglife Triathlon in Detroit Lakes in August. Eden said, “I want to do it.” Mom’s response was, “You have to train pretty hard to finish a competition like that.”

Eden was diagnosed at the age of four with CHARGE Syndrome at Gillette Children’s Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota. CHARGE Syndrome is a pattern of birth defects ranging from mild to severe, in which, many disabilities can be present. Eden is visually impaired, hearing impaired (with a future diagnosis of complete deafness), and lacks a vestibular system (no semi-circular canals). Eden started swimming on

a club swim team in the 3rd grade. At the time, according to her mother, her swimming looked more like a “fish out of water.” Every year she got stronger and learned to attain some kind of balance in the water. She is able to complete flip turns at the wall, and dive off the blocks at the start of a race, but she looks to her neighbour when the whistle blows. Eden cannot hear much without her hearing aid, so she relies on her vision for her starts. Being visually impaired, Eden does not see hand signals if she is in one of the middle lanes. If possible, she is moved to Lane 1 or Lane 8 for starts. She has been known to hit a wall here and there, but she doesn’t want special treatment during competitions. She doesn’t like to be singled out as different, so she doesn’t use modifications at meets. Unfortunately, the USA Swim rules are pretty black and white so Eden has been disqualified a number of times. She doesn’t let those DQ’s get in her way of trying many different races, such as the butterfly and breaststroke, which are the two more technical races.

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A division of the North Dakota
Department of Public Instruction
Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent



Eden thought she would like to try something new. So she decided to go out for the Track team in Middle School. Her goal was to be able to run a 5K in the Fargo Marathon at the completion of her Track season. Her swim coach, Andrea, said she would run with her. Running seems to be the most difficult for her. Again, she had to train pretty hard to build some endurance to complete such a long race. Due to Eden's compromised vestibular system she is unable to ride a 2-wheeled bicycle. She has been riding a 3-wheeled tri-cycle that she peddles for about four years. It is definitely not made for bike competitions, but it has 3-speeds to make climbing hills easier.

Eden has been setting high goals for herself physically for a number of years. She is able to swim pretty well, ride bike, and run. So, it was only natural to want to do a triathlon, right? Last fall, at the end of her swim season she said, "I want to do a triathlon." Eden's sister, Maddy, completed a triathlon in Phy. Ed., so that is where she got the idea. It just so happens that the gym, in which Eden attends with her mom, was holding an indoor triathlon. She registered for the event but was not thrilled that she would have to compete in the youth division. The event consisted of a 100 yd. swim, a 30 minute bike ride and a 20 minute run. Eden finished the competition but stated that it was a little too easy.

Eden trained almost daily for her upcoming triathlon, whether it was biking, running, swimming, or another fitness class that she attends at the Sanford Family Wellness center. The big day finally arrived. Eden picked out her race day outfit, packed her bag, and ate a protein filled breakfast. It is about an hour drive from West Fargo to Detroit Lakes, and it was pretty humid already at 6:00 in the morning. Eden set up her staging area by laying out all of her equipment. She went to the registration booth and received her ankle timing bracelet, body number for biking, and her running bib. For safety precautions, Eden went in the water with the older division so she could be the last in the water. The water couldn't have been more calm and warm...perfect start to the race. Her mom and a family friend, Kayla, stayed by her the entire time. There were no visual markers along the water route, with the exception of an orange buoy, that Eden couldn't see until about 10 yds. away. The swim part of the competition consisted of 500 meters. Eden completed that almost effortlessly in 17:37. After swimming, she ran to the staging area to dry off. She put on her socks and laced up her tennis shoes, grabbed her snack and water bottle, and started peddling. The fatigue of biking started to show on her at about mile 14. The biking part of the competition consisted of 20 miles. Again, her bike is not built for competition so it took a lot more effort than it did for others. Eden finished biking in 1:27:39. The last event of the competition was up and it was getting pretty hot out by this time. Eden started off running pretty strong, but fatigue set in pretty quickly. You could see she was uncomfortable. The run part of the competition consisted of a 5K (3.1) mile run. She did stop and walk a few times but at the half way mark you could see the determination on her face. She was not going to quit. She had a little spurt at the end and sprinted through the finish line in 44:43.

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When it was all said and done it took her 2:40:44 seconds to complete her first triathlon, definitely a life changing event. Many people never even consider attempting something so gruelling, but Eden was already thinking and preparing of her next adventure. In fact, she has completed her latest adventure. Eden ran in the Go Far Woman run the very next weekend and finished a 10k (6.2 miles) race. It took her 1:21:00 to finish.

It was an honor and privilege to compete side by side with her. Her determination and “never quit” attitude is contagious. This attitude extends to the classroom, as well. Eden received an Academic Letter last year for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. I pray she continues to be the best she can be and try many things. You don’t have to be great to start, but you do have to start to be great.

Sincerely,

Jody Neva, mother to Eden



Jody (mother) Eden & Friend Kayla



The miracle isn't that you finish. The miracle is that you had the courage to start.

ACC What is it?

AAC. What is it and how can vision teachers use it? Those were questions that were covered and answered in the recent online class I took from Perkins School for the Blind entitled “Augmentative Communication Strategies for Students with Visual Impairments and Additional Disabilities”. It consisted of lessons and modules that ranged from topics on communication/conversations, literacy, play, and considerations of intervention. Participants had a chance to exchange and give their own experiences and ideas via a discussion forum. This was helpful as not all of the participants were vision teachers. There were physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech teachers, and even parents and were from all areas of the country and from other countries. This gave a broad range of expertise to the responses and discussions.

The class addressed the definition of Augmentative Communication which is “all forms of communication that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.” (American Speech Language and Hearing Association). This was a new way for me to view it as I have always thought of AAC as using only devices with icons and pictures to communicate. Although models and suggestions of different types of devices were reviewed, this class reiterated that AAC not only includes technology, but also facial expressions and gestures and even body language. The instructor, Megan Mogan, focused on the model of communication which always includes a sender and a receiver and how they communicate with an intent, behavior, and response. These areas were included in each lesson to consider when we viewed a video of a student or worked on a case study.

Augmentative Communication can contribute greatly to all students who are multiply disabled, but for students with additional visual impairments, it can be a challenge to implement this concept. Often students with visual impairments are not able to rely on other experiences or visual cues and need further instruction and exposure to tactual cues and verbal cues. The focus should be on the interaction between sender and receiver and not always on the technology or device that may be used.

I plan on using strategies and ideas that I have gained from this class with a couple of students I have that are not only visually impaired but multiply disabled as well. I want to collaborate with others on the teams such as physical and occupational therapists as I know that it will involve using all approaches to help the students be successful in using AAC.

Many interesting online workshops are offered through Perkins and I encourage anyone who is interested to go to their website and browse through what they have to offer at: <http://www.perkinselearning.org/learn>

Submitted by

Mary Verlinde, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind Vision Outreach Teacher



New app allows those using ASL to think in their native language and communicate into a written format.



About Creator of Sign2TXT App

Angie Craft is 52 and a Deaf Educator entering her 30th year of teaching deaf / hard of hearing students with additional disabilities. I am a graduate of Flagler College and USF. I am a member of Florida Educator of Hearing Impaired (FEHI). I have served on their Board of Directors, vended at the annual conferences and presented for several years. I love to travel and explore different cultures. I have worked in Japan in their deaf residential schools as an exchange teacher for several summers and hope to return someday to work with students with disabilities. www.handcraftedasl.com

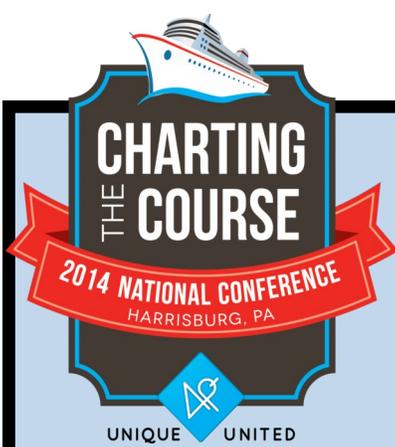
Why did you create Sign2TXT?

Sign2TXT is designed so that a child, whose primary means of communication is sign language, can find the visual representation of that sign and have the app type the text version. Deaf children use a visual language (ASL) that does not have a written version; it is solely a visual-gestural language. Therefore, putting their thoughts into a written format is often difficult. This app allows them to think in their native language and communicate into a written format. The color-coding of the parts of speech allows for a learning opportunity to visually teach how English grammar is written.

How does Sign2TXT work?

My goal was to create an educational app for students who are deaf, or hard of hearing, with additional handicapping conditions (Intellectually Disabled, Autistic, fine motor control issues), that will allow them to use technology to express themselves in print by using their first language, sign language. Let me explain: students will have a specially designed keyboard that uses the 41 hand-shapes that represent the more than 40,000 words/concepts in American Sign Language. By touching a key with the symbol representing a specific hand shape, a secondary page will appear with a list of 900 basic signed vocabulary that represent a specific word. When tapped, it types the word in a text box at the top of the page. Students then will have the option to copy/paste their expressions into another document. Holding down a tile will enlarge the tile making it easier to see. As a Special Needs Educator for more than 29 years, I believe that this app can also be used for any student whose primary means of communication comprehension is sign language, but who lacks the fine motor control needed to use sign language expressively. My personal goal is to give these children a voice. Together we can make this happen.





Our family had a wonderful trip and feel so blessed that we were able to go. We want to thank you and your company for the financial assistance that helped to make our trip possible!

Their were 80 4p- people and their families at this conference. It was amazing to walk around the hotel and see people like our daughter all over the place. It was the first time since our daughter was born, that we didn't get weird looks, comments and endless questions. Everyone there was and is going through the same experiences.

There were several sessions on all different medical topics that involve children with 4p-. There was also open discussion circles where we were able to discuss with others the day to day basics of living with a special needs child. They were uplifting and provided hope for our future as a family! Our three other children were able to participate in a Sibshop. This was a four hour session where the siblings of special needs children learned that they are just as important. They were taught that it's ok to feel a whole realm of emotions and they learned ways in which to deal with them.

Lastly, there was music and dancing in the evenings. 4p- children have a love for music, dance and motion. It was awesome to attend fun functions with Bria where her noises were accepted. We feel like we have made a new family. We bonded with several other families and look forward to attending another conference in two years.

Sincerely
Ron and Lisa Truax
Jedrik, Jera Brock and Bria





Collaboration is a great word in the field of education, but we have all seen collaboration occur without real, tangible results. I am so proud to say, however, that collaboration on the behalf of children and adults with dual sensory loss happens in a very meaningful way in North Dakota. New goals were identified and written into the 5 year plan last year and I am very confident that NDVS/SB and North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NDSR/RCDHH) will work effectively to improve services and results for children who have both a visual impairment and hearing loss. There is a renewed energy to make progress under the leadership of Director Sherri Nelson. We are also excited to begin working with our new liaison with the Department of Public instruction, Robin Tschider.

A number of teachers at NDVS/SB provide technical assistance (TA) for children with dual sensory impairment. Our teachers were primarily trained as teachers of the visually impaired, but all are committed to becoming cross-trained to the best of their ability to understand the implications of hearing loss. It is only with a team effort that we can hope to fully meet the needs of these deserving children. The project has many goals, but one of the most important is ongoing professional development of staff who provide services. I cannot say enough about our staff who dig into this cross-training and put their hearts into providing good services.

Speaking of staff, I am excited to welcome a number of new staff members going into the school year. Emily Stenberg is our new librarian. Margo Lentz-Berg was hired as the new NDVS/SB mobility specialist and Lisa Long took over coordination of Region One & Two out of Minot. There is one additional teaching position to fill and several new house-parents are being hired to work during our short term program weeks for children and adults.

We have also had a major construction project underway since April. The west wing (Community High School) was completely renovated and NDVS/SB installed an elevator to improve accessibility in our part of the building. There was a very tight schedule to complete before the beginning of the school year and we made it just in time! We are very excited to continue updating and making our school a state-of-the-art facility going into the future.

There is much going on at NDVS/SB and in the state. I look forward to a great year and more collaboration with my colleagues in education who serve children with dual sensory loss. It is not about us; it is all about helping them reach their goals.



Paul H. Olson, Superintendent
North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind



*“Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better!”*

Maya Angelo

Dr. Christine Roman Lantzy, a well-known educator, author, and lecturer in the area of Cortical Visual Impairment, used this quote in her presentation at the Third Annual American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment in Omaha, Nebraska. To help us know better, Dr. Roman published a book in 2007 entitled: *Cortical Visual Impairment: An Approach to Assessment and Intervention*. Dr. Roman-Lantzy is currently working on her second book in which she will detail an expanded way to look at each characteristic.

Dr. Roman-Lantzy reviewed the ten characteristics commonly seen in children with CVI. She identified why it's important to continue to use her two CVI Range Assessments.

- These assessment tools help describe a continuum of visual function.
- They use common language to standardize the severity of CVI.
- It allows you to monitor progress and improvements in the child's functional vision.
- Finally it helps you determine the appropriate interventions.

Dr. Roman added some new information not found in her 2007 book. She used the terms dorsal and ventral stream function when discussing the three phases of CVI. These two streams or pathways are responsible for higher visual processing. The ventral stream contains the 'visual library' as it allows for recognition and visual memory of what is being looked at. This pathway is commonly referred to the "What is it?" stream. The dorsal stream is the "Where Is It?" pathway. It helps one locate the object and direct their visual attention to the object and facilitates the visual guided movement to reach for the object. So if the visual scene is too complex, a child will have difficulty locating the object. Dr. Roman showed a picture of child trying to find his pacifier on a complex patterned background, but when placed on a plain background, the child was able to locate their pacifier.

She stated that in Phase I, or the 0 -3 Range, children are using only their dorsal stream function. Key points to remember with children in this phase include:

- They can't sort out any detail.
- No photographs are used with children in this phase.
- Environment needs to be very controlled as these children can't have any auditory or visual distractions.



“It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision.”

Helen Keller

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In Phase II or the Range 3+ to 7, children use vision with function and toward the end of this phase, they are beginning to use their ventral stream, "What is it?" Key points in this phase include:

- They realize that they have the power to impact their environment.
- At the end of Phase II, two dimensional materials will be appropriate.

Phase III or Range 7+ to 10, children begin to refine their ventral stream. She emphasized that children in this phase are at risk for being misunderstood about their needs. Their needs might appear subtle but they require intensive support. Some key points in this phase included:

- They might be able to move about in familiar settings but have significant difficulties in novel settings. Here is where a student might need O & M instruction.
- At this level you might help the child identify salient features about an object. You could place a cat outline on the light box and help the child learn about the "catness" features of a cat. Its ears, tails, and whiskers. Or on the iPad you might highlight these salient features with red markings.
- When moving to literacy and words, you might have the child look at the shape of the word and do a matching game where the child has to match the word to its outline. You also might highlight their sight words in yellow.

Cortical Visual Impairment continues to be a challenging visual impairment due to its brain based origin. Dr. Roman compared this impairment to viewing the world through a kaleidoscope image; one has trouble sorting out the information and making sense of it. Our job as educators is to figure out a way to remove the target from the kaleidoscope so the child can see the object.

She emphasized that we as educators must know why we are selecting the materials to use with the child. You can't use a generic lightbox-pom pom approach. Interventions are not isolated therapies but an approach that uses intentionality. A child is going to make progress when interventions are paired with meaningful routines frequently throughout the day.

Time of Day	Activity	CVI Characteristic	Adaptation
	Lunch		Red dish, red spoon on black tray
	Music		No adaptations-too noisy!

Student Considerations	Teacher	Environmental Considerations	ACC & AT
Student will look at simple 2D materials when they are backlit			
Allow student 5 to 10 seconds to fixate on a target			

Dr. Roman-Lantzy shared that she has been an invited consultant to the Bridge School in California and has worked with the staff to develop intervention planning templates. This school has a publication on their website on vision and planning strategies. Here is the link to this publication:

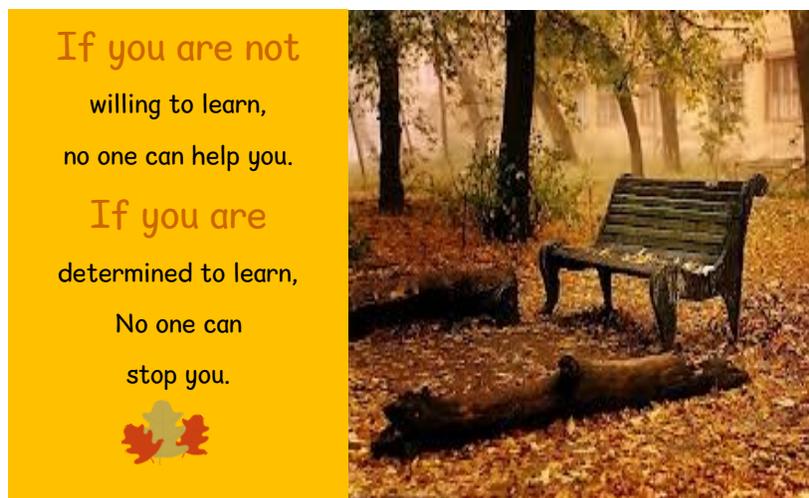
http://www.bridgeschool.org/outreach/docs/cs_visonaac.pdf

“The goal of this publication is to provide a better understanding of the characteristics of visual impairment and its impact and implications for people who have complex communication needs. Specific information about the range of visual impairments is provided. Additionally, a form for developing a visual profile is provided to support practical and informed decision-making regarding the presentation of visual information. Case studies and resources complete the publication with concrete examples for reference and further study.”

Dr. Roman is working on three research projects involving CVI. One study is with Dr. Wilkinson who works in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Penn State. The study involves Augmentative Alternative Communication Devices and how to implement CVI strategies on communication devices. The second study is with Sarah Blackstone who also works in the field of augmentative and alternative communication and is President of Augmentative Communication Inc. This study involves finding ways to eliminate “silos” of separate therapies. What is the best way to blend a child’s therapies? Thirdly, Dr. Roman is developing an infant screening tool. This screening would involve only two questions and one would look for three specific behaviors. Then when the child is between 9 and 12 months of age, a full CVI Range Assessment would be completed.

With Cortical Visual Impairment being the number one cause of visual impairment in the United States, we as educators must continue to do the best we can. Dr. Roman stated that what we do or fail to do, will impact the child’s cognition. So we as educators, need to keep educating ourselves on CVI and DO BETTER!

By Lanna Slaby, Teacher of the Visual Impaired NDVS/SB



3rd Annual Pediatric CVI Conference

By Cindy Williams, Teacher of the Visual Impaired NDVS/SB

This past summer, three outreach teachers from the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 3rd Annual American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment through funding provided by the ND Dual Sensory Project. The conference took place in Omaha over a couple days in June with around 120 attendees including ophthalmologists, optometrists, parents, teachers of the visually impaired, occupational therapists and other professionals and individuals who have a desire to increase interdisciplinary understanding of cortical visual impairment in children.

Many wonderful speakers/presenters filled the agenda of the conference including the well-known Christine Roman and Mark Borchert. Also included were pediatric ophthalmologists, occupational therapists, teachers of the visually impaired, and a parent panel among others. Attendees learned about the CVI range and intervention strategies and environmental adaptations, the importance of early detection of visual impairment in children with multiple disabilities, the importance of communication between parents and the child's CVI team, how optometric assessment and intervention is necessary to the treatment of pediatric CVI, and mealtime strategies along with other agenda topics. One pediatric ophthalmologist stated something I found quite interesting. From my notes it went something like this, "ophthalmologists were trained to fix things, thus they are physically and emotionally distressed when dealing with CVI patients and their lack of control over it (CVI). There is no direct way to fix it."

The conference was awe inspiring. As an educator, the opportunity to be among eye care health professionals including Neuro-ophthalmologist and others doesn't present itself too often. Listening to all the health care providers and professors of ophthalmology and neurology gave me a new insight as a teacher of the visually impaired. We can all learn from each other and health professionals can learn from our evaluations and CVI Range reports as much as we can learn from their exam notes and reports.

While attending the 3rd Annual American Conference on Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment, we became aware that they are in the process of developing what is called the "Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment Society." The society is being developed for numerous reasons including:

- To promote optimal care
- To promote research in PCVI
- To develop Best Practice guidelines
- To promote interdisciplinary learning
- To disseminate information more readily and accurately
- To advocate for patients with CVI



Their mission is as follows: "To promote the development of interdisciplinary understanding of pediatric cortical visual impairment through collaborative learning, research and the dissemination of resulting knowledge to the greater medical community and the public at large. Furthermore, this society seeks to enhance the well-being of PCVI patients and their families, and to advocate for them before government agencies and other organizations impacting the vision care of these patients." More information about the society and contact information can be found at <http://www.childrensfoundationomaha.org/documents/Continuing%20Medical%20Education/PCVI%20Business%20Meeting%202014.pdf>

Attending the conference was a wonderful educational experience for me and I am thankful for being able to attend a conference which involves bringing together an interdisciplinary understanding of cortical visual impairment providing much insight into the condition and interventions and background information. This opportunity provided me with further knowledge and understanding to provide the best possible services to the individuals and families I serve.

IPAT Set to Distribute Telecommunications Technology to People with Vision and Hearing Loss

Many residents of North Dakota who have a combined loss of hearing and vision may soon connect with family, friends and the community thanks to the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, iCanConnect. IPAT has been certified by the Federal Communications Commission to carry out this program, and in conjunction with various state partners, will provide support for the distribution of a wide array of telecommunications technology for persons with deaf-blindness living in the state.

When thinking about people who are deaf-blind, many see an image of Patty Duke portraying Helen Keller in the “Miracle Worker”. Sadly, that image does a disservice to people with deaf-blindness, as most do not have a complete loss of sight and hearing, but rather have limited sight and hearing. For the majority of people who meet the definition of deaf-blindness, the combined loss has occurred later in life, and may be due to an accident, illness or as a direct result of aging. Others meeting the definition have congenital conditions like Rubella or CHARGE, or have a genetic condition that leads to deaf-blindness such as Usher’s Syndrome.

To receive telecommunications technology under the iCanConnect initiative, an individual must complete an application and meet all the following conditions:

- Vision – a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the best corrected eye, or a field loss of 20 degrees or less, or a progressive loss with a prognosis leading to one or both of these conditions;

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- Hearing – a chronic impairment so severe that most speech cannot be understood without optimum amplification , or a progressive loss with a prognosis leading to that condition;
- Cognition – the functional abilities that would allow for the use of telecommunications, Internet access and advanced communications services; and,
- Income – has an income that does not exceed 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

IPAT has partnered with the North Dakota Information Technology Department, the Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, ND School for the Deaf, and the ND Dual Sensory Project. Together we will work to locate, educate, and distribute telecommunications equipment to persons with deaf-blindness. We will ensure that eligible applicants have access to the special equipment they find necessary to connect via communications technology. To obtain an application, or learn more about the iCanConnect: North Dakota program, call 1-800-895-4728, check out www.ndipat.org or talk to Kristin Vetter, Adult Services from ND School for the Deaf # 701 795-2792, or Sherri Nelson, ND Dual Sensory Project #701 239-7376 .



Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.

- Benjamin Franklin



Pepnet2



ND Pepnet2 team members Sherrri Nelson, Pam Smith, Kristen Vetter and Bambi

Lambert. Not Pictured is Tom Schiwal of ND VR.

Pepnet 2 (pn2) recognizes the full range of postsecondary education and training options available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those with co-occurring disabilities, and strives to enhance the capacity of those institutions to appropriately serve this diverse student population. Pn2 is a national collaboration of professionals with expertise in a broad array of content areas and a variety of environments,

including research, technology, personnel development, media production, and technical assistance. The pn2 mission and the focus of their resources is to increase the education, career and lifetime choices available to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

At the January Summit, our North Dakota Team developed a plan to work on for the next year. One of the activities we will be sponsoring is a Transition Workshop to be held in Fargo during Deaf Awareness Week in September, 2014. This workshop will be open to all middle and high school students in North Dakota who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and their parents.

It is also recommended for all professionals who are working with those students in whatever capacity they may be providing. We will be partnering with Pepnet 2, ND Department of Public Instruction, ND Dual Sensory Project, MN Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, the Pacer Center, ND Hands & Voices, ND Vocational Rehabilitation, IPAT, and others.

Additionally, in conjunction with the workshop, we are thrilled to bring comedian Keith Wann to Fargo for an evening of entertainment and education, Friday, September 26, 2014

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The North Dakota pepnet 2 (Postsecondary Educational Programs Network) state team attended a national summit in Denver Colorado in January. All 50 states were represented, and the collaboration was fantastic!



“Good Things Come in Small Packages...From Harris Communications”

On August 8th, while in Minneapolis for a conference (see Sherri Nelson’s article), Pam Smith, Sherri Nelson and I had the opportunity to visit Harris Communications located at 15155 Technology Drive in Eden Prairie. This family-owned business, which specializes in assistive products for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, is a real gem; and if you’ve ever ordered from this company, you’ve experienced the friendly, fast service.

We visited the showroom which displayed a variety of assistive technology in the form of captioning phones, personal amplifiers, FM/digital and loop systems, signaling/alerting systems, emergency alarms and items that hospitals, courtrooms, hotels and workplaces can use to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Harris also carries amplified and visual display stethoscopes for medical professionals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

A large selection of books and multimedia materials provide information about baby sign language, cochlear implants, Deaf culture, interpreting, sign language and sign language dictionaries. Many of the materials have been produced by authors who are Deaf or hard of hearing. There are 34 resources for parents and 249 materials for children. Fun and novelty items in the form of games, jewelry, posters, flash cards and greeting cards are also available and these make great gifts! Some of these accessories are available in our own NDSR/RCDHH’s Dakota Hands Store!

A product catalog, an assistive technology guide and a product comparison chart can be ordered or downloaded at the Harris Communication website: www.harriscomm.com
The company may also be reached at (800) 825-6758 (voice), or at (952) 388-2152 (videophone).

Free ground shipping is available within the 48 contiguous states on most orders; however, if you happen to be in the Twin Cities stop by, visit Harris Communications and experience this gem yourself!

-- Submitted by Renae Bitner, Bismarck Office



THE ART OF WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAFBLIND

A collaborative effort by Paul Olson (Superintendent at North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind), Jeanne Kolo-Johnson (MN Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services), Sherri Nelson (ND Dual Sensory Project) and Paul Deeming (MN Deaf-Blind Services) produced a great training for 1 ½ days held in Fargo, North Dakota, on August 18 & 19, 2014. About 35 professionals from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota attended this event, including a parent, Interpreters, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Teachers of the Deaf, Speech-Language Pathologists, an Audiologist, Early Interventionists, Technology Specialists, Administrators, and Paraprofessionals.

Paul Deeming provided great insight on the impact of dual sensory impairments through the use of vision and hearing simulations, sighted guide techniques, and discussion on the psychosocial issues surrounding deafblindness. Further information was shared regarding the roles of interpreters, interveners, and SSPs and the technology that is utilized by individuals with dual sensory impairments. Peggy Shireley from IPAT also spoke on the I CAN CONNECT program to be utilized for communication equipment for individuals with dual sensory impairments.

Thanks to all the staff who attended and the team that was involved with all the planning!

Sherri Nelson, Project Director

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The best and most beautiful things
in the world cannot be seen or even touched.
They must be felt with the heart.

HELEN KELLER



Magic of

THE ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL CONFERENCE

By Sherri Nelson

As I sift through the 13 pounds of papers that I brought back from the Alexander Graham Bell conference held June 26-29, 2014 in Orlando, Florida, I realize that my passion for this conference never waivers. Although I have only attended this conference twice, the privilege of attending will always remain. Although my beliefs regarding communication options may differ slightly from those of AGBell, I respect their philosophy and determination to teach Listening and Spoken Language. I believe that education and knowledge is very powerful and we can all learn from each other. Therefore, I wish to share my insights from a couple of sessions that I had the opportunity to attend.

Preconference Session: Tomorrow's Magic Made Real Through Today's Learning by Amy Peters Lalios & Pam Stemper

Tomorrow's magic is language competency. Capitalizing on meaningful experiences is the key. Meaning FULL experiences include access to information, dynamic and engaging, attention, primary needs met, emotion, relevance, zone of proximal learning, alternation, pacing & pauses, facilitated or intentional, shared doing and thinking and cumulative. The more we know, the more we CAN grow. We must look at a child's schema (mental representations of experiences in long-term memory). The levels of knowledge could include the concepts, verbal labels, scripts, and narratives that are utilized.

The risks of hearing loss affect input, experience, stimulation, perceptual abilities, experiential knowledge, vocabulary, cognitive energy, the listening range, and incidental learning.

There is a triciprocal process that involves the child—the professional—and the parent(s). Parents are the constant! Early experiences matter! Parents' words matter! The family is the life's classroom and Love is at the center.

There are #5 principles: Understanding and respecting how a baby's brain develops is imperative; Capitalizing on neurosynchrony allows for ample language development; Babies development is optimized by encompassing and engaging innate abilities and behaviors; Supporting parents and strengthening the family unit is paramount; and finally, Maximizing language development fostered in a loving and safe environment, allows children to fulfill potential.

Continued on Page 18

2nd Preconference Session: SUPPORTING SUCCESS for CHILDREN with Hearing LOSS by Karen Anderson & Lynne Price

80% of schools serving students with hearing loss only have 1-2 students.

Hearing loss is NOT: a learning disorder, Cognitive Disorder or Attention Disorder. Hearing loss is an ACCESS issue creating barriers to learning in the classroom and impacts social interactions.

40% of children with hearing loss have other educational needs! Only 10% of children (infants – age 18 yrs.) use their hearing aids full time; 40% use them 4hrs/day or less!

Assessment : performance to consider for eligibility—is different for every student!

The goal is for a student to become an effective and efficient learner. It's about how and how fast the brain processes information through listening. Listening skills directly impacts language acquisition, reading decoding, comprehension and spelling.

Independence with hearing devices is critical because only the student can verify that he is receiving access to the classroom communication each day. Schools must ensure that children have the skills they need to be able to accurately self-monitor and report arising issues.

Look at the Pragmatic items that must be mastered by age 7: provides information on request, repairs incomplete sentences, ends conversation, interjects, apologizes, requests clarification, makes promises, asks questions to problem solve and predict, retells a story, creates original stories, compares and contrasts.

For Academic Readiness look at Academic rigor, cognitive potential, listening skill competency, comorbidity, history of amplification usage, amount and types of support, and standardized assessments.

Functional assessment requires instruction in perception of hearing, processing issues, knowledge of self, and advocacy.

Areas to assess when considering the needs/skill levels of students with hearing loss: speech perception/device use; listening skills; independence & self advocacy; language use and processing; social skills & pragmatics; and academic readiness.

Also there was a look at Access considerations; the expanded core curriculum and annual assessments. Lots of assessments were shared and discussed in this session!

For further information from Karen Anderson check out her website: <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>



9th ANNUAL PACER SYMPOSIUM

By Sherri Nelson, Director of the Dual Sensory Project

Staff from the Adult Services Program at the North Dakota School for the Deaf/ Resource Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Pam Smith and Renae Bitner) and I attended the PACER Symposium in Minneapolis on August 7, 2014. The opening keynote address, *Restraint, Seclusion and Exclusion: The Grandma Test*, was presented by Larry Wexler, Director of the Research to Practice Division of the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSEP). He spoke on the importance of prevention and good instruction for all children & young adults. He emphasized the need for a multi-tiered support system, trauma informed care, effective data collection (“You treasure what you measure.”), culturally sensitive practices, and the need to change adult behaviors.

Breakout sessions were held in the morning and afternoon, along with a noon presentation by a panel from the Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health and a presentation on Prevention of Bullying by Julie Hertzog. The closing keynote presentation was by Dr. Susan Jenkins, Director of the Bluestem Center for Child and Family Development in Minnesota. Her talk focused on understanding the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary methods of mental health evaluations and understanding the importance of teacher observations for diagnosis and treatment. The mental health/behavioral/developmental diagnoses in children are always works in progress!

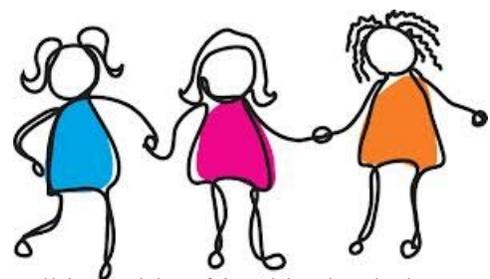
Jo Mascorro, an independent consultant from San Antonio, Texas for education specializing in the areas of behavior intervention, communication strategies, parenting skills, and programming for students with disabilities, was the keynote presenter after lunch. She also held breakout sessions in the morning and afternoon. I attended her afternoon session, *Working with Parents, Teachers and Others: A Team Approach to Meeting the Needs of Students with Challenging Behaviors that interfere with Teaching and Learning*.

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Ms. Mascorro presented with humor and compassion regarding teaming with parents and guardians. She emphasized **Hear, See and Do**. What does the behavior **LOOK** like, **SOUND** like, and **COUNT** the number of behaviors. A behavior is fueled by the people or the environment that people are in. We alter behavior based on where we are and who we are with. Separate the child from the behavior. Refrain from comments that are judgmental. Intent should be to share and compare information. Clearly describe behaviors that interfere with the learning and teaching process. Never make a child pay because the primary adults lack skills!!

She gave us some phrases and words to **beware** of when talking with parents/ professionals including: *"I know how you feel...We have a "little problem"...I don't think you really understand...What I hear you saying is....They're in DENIAL (You never have the option to use the word, DENIAL!!! It is all about HOPE, you do not have the right to burst the HOPE)...You really need to CALM DOWN.....There really is nothing I can do....I've tried EVERYTHING and NOTHING works.....Your child NEVER, ALWAYS, CAN'T, WON'T, REFUSES, IS NOT ABLE TO....."*

Ms. Mascorro provided useful information to consider when working with others. Additional breakout sessions were held on the topics of anxiety, depression, Asperger's, school discipline and juvenile justice issues, transition to employment and student success.



Walking with a friend in the dark
is better than walking alone in the light.

Helen Keller



So the World May Hear

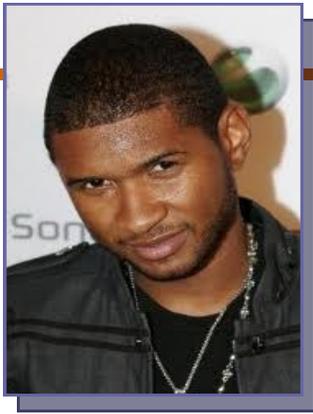
On August 8th, I had the opportunity to participate a most amazing tour of a business I have ever experienced! Sherri Nelson, Renae Bitner, and I met with representatives from, and toured part of the tremendous business known as STARKEY in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

You may be aware that Starkey manufactures hearing aids.... But have you ever had the chance to see the process in action? It is amazing!! We were able to walk-through the process from the time the order is received- with no delays since Starkey has their *own zip code*, through the creation of an individualized hearing aid- *lasers and really tiny parts are involved*, to the point where is it mailed to the anxiously waiting customer :D....all within a few short days!

One of my favorite parts of the tour was seeing enormous vats full of thousands of hearing aids that have been donated to Starkey. Those hearing aids are collected, examined, repaired if necessary, cleaned, and then sent to people with hearing loss all over the world! It is heartwarming to think of all the people who will be helped by this wonderful program!

Pam Smith , Coordinator
Adult Outreach Services





Why we do what we do

Usher formed Usher's New Look in 1999 at the tender age of 20 with the help of his mother. They were passionate about recognizing the vital need for positive role models and mentors for disadvantaged children and adolescents and wanted to help find ways to provide better lives for them. Usher's New Look is a registered 501 (c) 3 tax exempt public charity and is dedicated to bridging the gap between despair and success for young people all over the world.

We are at the forefront of the EDUCATION CRISIS, meeting youth where their interests lie and developing them as global youth leaders by way of Access, Awareness & Empowerment. Our peer-to-peer training model focuses on developing well-rounded, forward-thinking leaders who excel in the Four Pillars of Talent, Education, Career, and Service.

Education is a basic human right. Did you know that:

Every 26 seconds in the U.S. a student drops out of school.

This costs taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars in lost revenue, health care, welfare and often incarceration costs for those who have lost their way.

This year, 7.5 million students will miss a month or more of school, and only 49% of these students will graduate high school.

The days of earning a living wage without a high school diploma are long gone. Students who drop out earn significantly less than their graduating peers, are more likely to be convicted of a crime, and are less likely to fulfil their potential.

Education can save the world!

Worldwide, nearly 900 million people cannot read or write. Global illiteracy drives extreme poverty, undermines democracy and fuels terrorism.

OUR RESULTS

- Students who participate in Usher's New Look achieve 100% graduation rates
- 98% of New Look participants go on to Higher Education and Job Placement

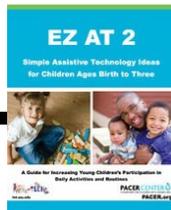
The New Look Effect: 100% of these youth will go on to pay it forward as mentors of youth in their communities. By investing in Usher's New Look youth today, you are paving the way to success for many generations to come; you are creating a better future.

For more information go to: <http://ushersnewlook.org/programs/why-support-ushers-new-look/>

RESOURCES

“EZ AT 2” iBook now available at iTunes Store

PACER’s popular “EZ AT 2” book is now available in an iBooks edition. Complete with video, picture examples, an interactive glossary, and the full support of iPad’s built-in accessibility features, “EZ AT 2” brings creative ideas to life to help children ages birth to 3 with disabilities use assistive technology (AT) to participate more fully in daily routines and activities. Designed for newer generation iPads, the “EZ AT 2” iBooks edition can be downloaded **free** at the [iTunes store](#).



A GREAT RESOURCE!!!!

Perkins Paths to Literacy: This website is the result of a joint project between [Perkins School for the Blind](#) and [Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (TSBVI). By combining their resources and expertise, they hope to assist educators and families in the quest to provide literacy experiences for children who are blind or visually impaired.

The information on this site ranges from a basic overview of literacy to various stages of development and special challenges, as well as an exploration of different media (print, braille, auditory strategies). They encourage you to add your ideas and questions, so that this will be an interactive hub of resources.

Here are some examples of great sites to explore:
Scribbling with my son who is Deaf-Blind:
<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/scribbling-my-son-who-deafblind>

Importance of Classroom Jobs for Children with Visual Impairments:

<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/classroom-jobs-ecc-visual-impairments>

Orientation & Mobility Apps:

<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/orientation-mobility-apps>

Is My Child Getting A Quality VI Program:

<http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/my-child-getting-quality-vi-program>

ZERO TO THREE has developed and released a new, free app called *Let’s Play!*, which provides parents and grandparents with fun ideas for keeping babies and toddlers entertained and learning, especially during daily routines. Parents can search activities by age, share activities via social media, and tag their favorites.

Download the *Let’s Play!* app on [iTunes](#) or from the [Google Play Store](#).

UP COMING EVENTS



CORTICAL/CEREBRAL VISUAL

Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment Workshop to be held in Grand Forks at North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind on September 25 & 26, 2014. Beth Ramella, Outreach Director at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, will be talking on Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) the fastest growing visual impairment diagnosis today! For more information Jane Glander, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, #701 795-2700. Registration fee: \$15

Comedic Performance and Legal Shield workshop by Keith Wann, known for his standup comedy (www.keithwann.com) and You Tube videos will be held on Friday, September 26, 2014 at 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. at the Fargo North High School Theatre. As a hearing child of Deaf adults, Wann is an original performing ASL artist and has been featured in several short films. He travels all over the country sharing his talents and humor. These events are FREE!



FREE COMEDY

2nd Annual North Dakota Transition Summit-“*Oh the Places You’ll Go!*” to be held in Fargo, ND, at the Skills & Technology Center on September 26 & 27, 2014. Topics to be addressed include: Transition and the Law, Student-Directed IEPs, Hearing Loss – Technological Changes, Helping Youth Prepare for Employment, VR Services and Benefits, Hands & Voices , and Parent Resources and Advocacy from PathFinder Parent Center. Sessions will focus on increasing the ability to be responsive to the unique transition needs of youth who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and their families, supporting them in achieving valued life outcomes. This workshop is FREE! For more information contact: Pam Smith, Adult Outreach Coordinator from ND School for the Deaf/Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at #701 665-4401 or pam.smith@sendit.nodak.edu



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