



The Lions Roar



THE LIONS ROAR

July 2009

Education

By Craig Meador, Director On-Campus Programs



June is over and we have concluded another exciting school year. Here are some updates from the end of a great year:

P.R.I.D.E.: This is our second year as a Positive Behavior Intervention Support model school. In short what this means is that we have adopted a focus on creating a positive learning environment for all students, with clear expectations while understanding the individual learning needs of each. Much of our training came through the NCYRS "Creating a Culture of Care" program from the University of Oklahoma. We completed the staff training last fall. We then implemented the P.R.I.D.E. program in our school. PRIDE is an acronym that stands for: Positive, Respectful and Responsible, Independent, Dependable, and Engaged in Learning.

Students earned pride dollars that were exchanged for school supplies, treasure chest items and treats. Each month tallies were taken from the different advisory groups (homerooms), and the group with the highest number of pride dollars for the month won a special lunch, outing or activity. In addition, students recognized outstanding staff that had gone the extra mile to make their world better. It was nice to see recognition flow both ways.

Short Course Pilot: We piloted three short course programs this year. Each short course was designed for specific student needs. Our turnout was lighter than expected but we are going to continue with short course opportunities. We are going to focus on self-esteem and dealing with blindness. Our plan is to partner with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) in three weekend sessions during the year. The first will be in conjunction with the DSB workshops held at the Council for the Blind Convention in Pasco, WA, this Fall.

Northwest Environmental Science Camp: The Northwest Environmental Science Camp directed by Paul Baldwin and Lisa Hodge was another great example of excellent programming. Students were immersed into activities and programs with a focus on the unseen world of bacteria. Students worked in teams in their discovery process. Some of the assignments included growing bacteria cultures, identifying types of bacteria, reports on specific bacteria, skits that focused on the effect that these bacteria had on everyday life and completing large paper mache replicas. This year's attendance was 32 students from Washington. Due to budget constraints the Oregon programs were not able to send students.

All School Picnic and Awards Assembly: Parents, students, staff and friends gathered on June 11, to celebrate a great year at WSSB. Awards were presented in many categories that ranged the full gamut of activities at WSSB. Honor Roll winners were recognized and the winners of the Academic Awards were announced.

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Education (continued)

By Craig Meador, Director On-Campus Programs

Graduation 2009:

This year's theme was "Walk on Cloud 09". WSSB recognized eleven graduates this year they are: Lark Braun, Spokane; Robby Cole, Grapeview; Ryan Dawson, Outlook; LiQin Rebecca Fu, Woodland; Israel Gonzales, Vancouver; Austin Kashow, Vancouver; Jose Martinez, Mt. Vernon; Emily Opheikens, Lake Stevens; Joseph Pyles, Mukilteo; Andrew West, Vancouver; and Desirree Woodin, Covington.

Summer Programs:

Three summer programs began on June 21. YES 1— 20 students (6 students from Korea); Compass—6 students; and Sports/Tech and Rec. Camp—14 students.

After School Sculpting Opportunity

By Mollie Hands, Staff and Volunteer

"I just love this class!" said student Lucene, "I can't wait till Tuesdays each week and I can't believe it is over already". This is the second year for our after-school sculpting class at WSSB. The class was over in mid-March, after seven sessions with artist and stone sculptor, Petra Brambrink.

Petra contacted Adrienne Fernandez, WSSB Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator, with the idea of introducing our students to sculpting. The response has been amazing as well as the works of art that have resulted from her teachings and guidance. Several other volunteers assist the eight or ten students who signed up for the class but Petra is the one they want to have look at their projects and give her advice. What can I do to make this look more like a wolf, a mermaid, a turtle? Whatever they have decided to conquer or create, they listen carefully as the instructions and suggestions are given in Petra's lovely German accent.

The first class starts with deciding what each student would like to create from the soap stone rocks Petra brings with her to our large and wonderful art room. She always says, "An animal is a good choice, one with not too many details, like a long thin tail, but maybe lying down with the tail wrapped around the body." Students then mold a clay model of their vision, keeping in mind Petra's suggestions. The mold is fired that night and then used each week for the next several classes as a guide. So as Lucene works on her soapstone she refers back to the small original creation, comparing and feeling where the soapstone needs to be smoother, maybe more indentation, less curvy, etc.

The young artists learn to use many tools as they progress, from hammers, big and small, chisels of different shapes and curves, files and sand papers of all types and grades. They become quite skilled and are very pleased when visitors come in to observe their progress and often, they can actually tell what it is the student is creating!

This year, as we did last year, the finished sculpted pieces were displayed for a week or so in our Commons area behind glass for all the staff and students to observe. It was quite impressive!

Petra has quite a few grand ideas for our campus. Her ideas include sculpted works of art done by our students. They would build a sort of totem pole, which would tell a history of our school. It could even be added to yearly. The indoor sculpture would feature two "totem" poles, each one consisting of five stacked stone pieces with a Native American theme about seeing, blindness and wisdom is part of her plan. The finished creation would include various metals, soapstone, wood and metal plates, with engravings and braille text.

Outreach Department Update

By Dee Amundsen, Director of Outreach

National Outreach Forum: WSSB hosted the National Outreach Forum from May 13–16. The Outreach Forum is a group of vision professionals who administer Outreach programs in schools for the blind around the country. This group meets each year at a different school for the blind. The thirteen people that attended came from Maryland, West Virginia, Louisiana, Texas, Montana, Idaho, Nebraska, Tennessee and Michigan. We really felt the impact of the economy with this event as typically attendance at the Forum is around 40 people. The purpose of this group is to share ideas and problem-solve issues regarding providing quality, timely and enough services to blind and visually impaired students who are in public schools. Outreach services and Outreach service delivery systems vary greatly from state to state and this variety and diverse implementation of services encourages rich conversations when this group meets in person or on our Forum listserv.

The weather was perfect and the campus was beautiful. For the first time since the Outreach Forum was founded in 1990, we video streamed about 50% of the event. Sherry Hahn and Ed Lukowski from WSSB's technology department were absolutely invaluable in setting up and monitoring the video streaming. Those who could not attend were able to watch large parts of the Forum, live, by simply going to the U Stream website and viewing from their home or work computer, from wherever they happened to be in the country. The event was a huge success and, once again, our national reputation for excellence was confirmed by multiple comments from Outreach Forum participants.

2009-2010 School Year: The Outreach Department will start the next school year by providing itinerant vision services to about 35 districts and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services to about 20 districts. Services are provided by nine itinerant teachers (five of whom are also certified O&M specialists) and one braille transcriber. In addition to providing on-going direct and consultative itinerant services to school districts in Washington through contractual agreements, we also provide initial support, at no charge, to districts as they begin the process of determining the type and level of services needed by their blind or visually impaired student(s). The Instructional Resource Center and Braille Access Center, both part of the Outreach Department, will be busy this summer processing orders for books and materials so that visually impaired and blind students will have their alternate format books on time for the beginning of the school year.

Video Clips on Blindness Tips

Our Video Clips on Blindness Tips continue to receive a lot of hits through our website—with 951 hits in June alone! (www.wssb.wa.gov) The following videos are available:

- ◆ Bed Making
- ◆ Buttoning
- ◆ Cooking:
 - Oven
 - Microwave
 - Sandwich
 - Fruit/Veggie Prep
 - Stovetop
- ◆ Fitness (Core and Strength Training)
- ◆ Folding Clothes
- ◆ Folding Money
- ◆ Learning to Pour
- ◆ Matching Clothes (1 and 2)
- ◆ Prosthetic Eye
- ◆ Room Familiarity (1, 2, 3, and 4)
- ◆ Self Medicating
- ◆ Shaving
- ◆ Sighted Guide
- ◆ Tying Shoes
- ◆ 2-Point Touch
- ◆ Constant Contact
- ◆ Locate a Bus Stop
- ◆ Zipping

Update from the Superintendent

By Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, Superintendent

Considering the difficult financial time we are having in our state, we still had a wonderful school year. Although many activities were limited, our staff did a great job of keeping focus where it needs to be--**on students!** On-campus enrollment remained constant with students entering and exiting throughout the school year keeping enrollment between 65-70. Students continue to make great progress (up to 5 years growth in many specialized skill areas within one year) increasing academic, independent, and social skills, as well as self esteem and confidence in knowing they can be successful and do much more than many thought was possible!

I've always said "specialized training is like learning a foreign language, if you want to learn how to speak French, go to France." Likewise, if you want to develop the specialized skills that can lead to success for a person who is blind and visually impaired (BVI) immerse yourself in those skills and associate with others using the same skills. Your skill set will occur quicker, therefore giving the necessary skills to be successful when the student returns to their home district. Having these tools helps level the playing field and makes all the difference. The ability to provide these concentrated, effective and efficient programs happens because Washington Educators, Consumers, Parents and the Legislature understand that investing in students and providing a quality education is key to success in the future. Thank you to all for supporting specialized services to BVI children.

Other successes:

- ◆ Outreach services continue to expand, based upon our ability to locate highly qualified Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TVI).
- ◆ Braille production and our partnership program with the Women's Correctional Center are making a difference for students.
- ◆ The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) continues to amaze me with the volume of materials that flow to and from local school districts supporting approximately 1,600 students throughout our state.
- ◆ WSSB's continued commitment to assistive technology is making a difference on campus and statewide. Hopefully in the future more equipment can be avail-

able for students in school districts to help the district decide to invest in a specific piece of technology.

- ◆ Online learning receives a lot of attention and we continue to push this issue. Often it feels like we are pushing a chain uphill, but we can't stop pushing! Online learning is growing every year and we **must** guarantee that BVI children will not be left out of this important resource due to lack of access. WSSB and a few partners throughout the country are making a difference in this area. Stay tuned for more information.
- ◆ Facilities—our legislature continues to invest in our facilities allowing WSSB to become more efficient in service delivery and also in utilizing larger percentages of our resources to direct student services.

Budget reductions: Due to budget reductions of \$621,000 (roughly 5%) over the next two years, the following services have been eliminated unless we can secure other funding to help keep them in place: Pilot Eastside Regional Program, Fiscal Tech position; interpreter position; teacher aide position; and Summer School Programs. This year we were able to offer these important programs by moving them into the end of June enabling us to utilize current biennium dollars. In addition, the following services will be reduced: mental health services; travel, equipment and supplies, and reduction of one educational reform day.

As much as we hated to see the above happen, these choices seem to have the least temporary impact on students and we are also hopeful that in the future some of these services could be re-established. We will continue to provide quality services and explore new partnerships that will allow us to be more efficient and effective in delivering the type of services that BVI children need and deserve to be successful.

This coming school year WSSB will once again be fully immersed in the national accreditation process, which has helped the school continue to grow and improve the quality of services we provide. WSSB is nationally accredited (K-12) through Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and is also a member of the Council of Schools for the Blind.

Braille Access Center (BAC)/Instructional Resource Center (IRC) News

By Colleen Lines, Manager, BAC/IRC

We are part of your TEAM! Did you ever stop to realize how many people are involved in serving your BVI students? The five employees that work in the Ogden Building consider ourselves part of your team! In addition to us, we have volunteers in all areas and incarcerated women working to provide quality braille transcription for your students in a timely, cost-efficient manner. Our program serves districts and agencies that provide services to BVI students throughout Washington and beyond! Here are a few statistics:

For School Year 2008-09:

- ◆ 1,511 total students registered with the IRC
- ◆ 1,097 legally blind (we receive quota funds for)
- ◆ 6,213 accessible media items shipped to districts/agencies
- ◆ 1,886 e-mail responses regarding materials, sourcing books
- ◆ 98 new Braille textbooks and other materials transcribed
- ◆ 95 new Large Print textbook reproductions

KUDOS! We are very proud of our transcribers' accomplishments:

- ◆ **Shonda Foster** received her NLS Nemeth certification (Braille Math & Science Code)!
- ◆ **Felicia Dixon** received her NLS Literary Braille certification.
- ◆ **Regina Jones** received her NLS Literary Braille certification.

Way to go TEAM!

Exciting Trips Into the 'Stream'

By Sherry Hahn, Digital/Distance Learning Coordinator

Ever trying to see how to reach as many people as possible, WSSB ventured into the technical jungle. This past month we jumped into the stream, the video stream that is. Dee Amundsen, our Director of Outreach, hosted a national meeting of likeminded Teachers of the Visually Impaired in an event called the National Outreach Forum. Approximately 30 people gather annually to discuss what is happening in the outreach world and every year a different state is chosen to be the host for the event. This year was Washington's year.

With budget cuts and state restrictions on travel Dee became concerned with whom and how many could possibly attend. The WSSB IT and Digital Learning department (mainly Ed Lukowski) got together with her and suggested doing a live stream of the event. So what is video streaming? *Streaming video* is content sent in compressed form over the Internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. In our case, it was a live broadcast of reports and presentations held on our campus by those fortunate enough to be able to leave their state and come visit us. We hooked up the camera, put microphones in place and with Ed to keep everything working together, we pushed this event out across the US. What a positive experience it was and we received great comments from those that were able to watch, even from the east coast.

So on May 28 we decided to try our hand at doing this again. WSSB held its annual volunteer recognition program, an evening of entertainment by our students to thank all those that volunteer at WSSB to support our kids. Being a residential school many families are unable to travel to all our events but with video streaming we were able to provide our parents another way to join their children. Comments came in from parents that they so appreciated being able to see their child perform right from their own living room, a grandparent being able to attend from their living room while being across the country, a volunteer able to attend when they could not be here in person.

By the way it is free – keep an eye out, you may want to join us too!



Residential Life—Where Learning & Enjoyment Meet

By Renee Corso, Associate Principal, After School and Evening Programs

Through the guidance and dedication of Adrienne Fernandez (Recreation/Volunteer Coordinator), our Residential Life Counselors (RLC), and our ever-growing corps of loyal and enthusiastic volunteers, WSSB students have enjoyed yet another year of discovery and participation in meaningful, high-quality social, educational, and recreational experiences. The variety of activities they have been involved in continues to expand.

Our fall and spring tandem cycling and golf programs, concluding their fourth seasons, are more popular than ever. When winter rolled around, the Thursday evening ski and snowboarding trips to Mt. Hood and annual day snowmobiling trek up to Mount St. Helens put a bit of sunshine into the gray days and added a glow of anticipation to the faces of many. For those with a penchant for the arts, there was the Portland Art project in which to take part, a six-week sculpting class right here on campus to get the creative juices flowing, and numerous audio-described plays at N.W. Children's Theatre to enjoy, including Hansel & Gretel, The Wizard of Oz, Alice in Wonderland, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Goodnight Moon. And let us not forget WSSB's first "home grown" radio theatre presentation of A Christmas Carol, which aired in December on our fledgling internet radio station. From October through mid-December, students met in the Irwin Library once a week to read, rehearse, and record the program thanks to an heroic effort by Don Mitchell (National Federation of the Blind partner) for editing the final recording, Jerry DeLaunay (Omni Media) for technical advice and actual broad-

casting, and Chuck Williams (RAB partner) for logistical support, the program was completed and aired just before Christmas. Through the generosity of the NFB, participating students also received their own CD copy of the radio play as a reminder of their hard work and accomplishment. Horseback riding, bowling, hiking, Winter Hawks games, beading and crafts classes, Bingo nights, and weekly visits by Dove Lewis Therapy Dogs were among our "established" activities students had to choose from. The Harvest Dance, hosted in Clarke Cottage by RLC staff, the Winter Formal sponsored by Student Council, and Prom, spearheaded by the Senior Class provided students wonderful opportunities to practice social etiquette skills, not to mention being evenings everyone will long remember. This year, students also experienced their first overnight cross-country ski "camp" on the Mt. Hood National Forest, an Easter Egg Hunt, and took in classes on nutrition, dental hygiene, and health. The Rod Rally, our yearly "grand finale" recreational extravaganza, had an incredible turn-out and grows in numbers and popularity as the years come and go.

WSSB students have had a tremendous year of experiences and enjoyment from the many after-school opportunities that living life in the Northwest provides to all of us. With the opening of the new Kennedy Fitness Center, complete with recreation center, gymnasium, workout room, and swimming pool, and new and exciting surprises in the works, we are looking forward to the many adventures that are waiting in the wings for everyone next year.

Snaphots (poem by Judi Sorter, Proofreader)

Most of the time, most of the time, it's not so bad being blind. Things could be worse. But sometimes, it's a pain in the heart, being set apart, again. For everyone those moments are different. What tears at your soul may not trouble me at all. Is it endless blue sky? A storm-tossed sea? A beloved face? The pageantry of a grand parade? Those things would be fine to see; but for me it's those bits of paper that capture a moment in time, shown between friends with pride, and I stand aside and sip my tea. A picture's worth a thousand words—but they are silent, silent to me.

Speaking Personally — The Challenge of Summer!

By Jim Eccles, President, Former Students Association

Bearing in mind that my sixties-era formative childhood was spent back in the modern-day equivalent of the so-called Dark Ages, when huge buildings were built to house the university and corporate computers assembled inside them and residential blind school students only went home for Christmas, Summer and one long weekend per month, I found those long-ago summers quite a challenge, until my fifth-grade year, living right here in Vancouver.

My first summertime problem was that all my close school friends lived in small, Seattle-area towns, so only an occasional braille letter brought us together, June through August. I tried to wile away the hours playing the ten game on the radio—I would turn off the radio, when I heard ten songs in a row, without hearing one, single Beatles song: I never, ever had to turn off the radio, in those halcyon days of Beatle mania.

Unfortunately activity could seem as much a curse as inactivity to me. At least every other summer, the Eccles family piled into the car late at night and drove to visit California relatives, back when old Highway 99 went right through the Main Streets of many California towns, complete with roadside orange juice stands, in the days before automobile air conditioning—except for my high-tech, southern California uncle, who had a window-mounted water-filled device that cooled us all off, if he drove fast enough! Since I could not play the hugely popular license plate game (find one starting with the next alphabet letter), I found long, scenic car rides really, really boring, too.

Then came my fifth-grade year, when our class fell way, way short of finishing the SINGING WHEELS reading series, during that school year. The story was all about a boy my own age, traveling with his family by covered wagon from the staid east to the exciting frontier west. When summer arrived, I got permission to take home an unbelievably huge number of remaining, unread volumes in the series and then I read them—with rapt attention—all summer long. That was the summer I got it about books, so's I could experientially understand the English literary critic who wrote, when I read his criticism over a decade later in my college literary criticism course, that the value of literature is transport: When I was reading about young Jerry sampling the water of the Sweetwater River or watching hunters on the wagon train making their own bullets, I found that I was no longer sitting without playmates in my too-hot house or crowded into a cramped car next to my too-tall sister; instead, I was exploring the old west and living a life of constant discovery as a young pioneer.

Thus, I would personally recommend reading as the best way to get through a hot, solitary summer, especially if the Internet goes down, the satellite dish falls over, or the free long-distance phone service goes dead. Pretty much wherever you are, one can almost always enjoy a good braille read: late in the dark of night, stuffed in the car (though they may have to let you ride in front with Mom and Dad), or even during a long, rainy week at Grandma's, where the only toy in the whole, entire house is one small car. Don't fight with your siblings over that one, lone car. Get a book and start your own life of faraway discovery!

Have yourself a happy summer.

Washington School for the Blind Foundation

By Barbara Sheldon, Executive Director



WSBF

Washington School for the Blind
Foundation

Helping Washington's Blind Youth Achieve Success

In these economic times isn't it nice to hear some good news? Here's what the Foundation has done this past year to provide funding and support for students in Washington who are blind and visually impaired.

Senior Technology Grant Program: This project allows students who are completing their final year at WSSB to acquire the technology that they are being trained to use while attending the school. The Foundation provides the grants at the beginning of the school year so that seniors can have the technology in their hands and learn to use it successfully. This grant requires a portion of the cost be paid back to the Foundation. By doing so, not only are seniors able to get the technology they need, but they have a vested interest in learning to use it fully and we are able to continue funding the project each year with the help of our donors as well.

This year's recipients are: Lark Braun, Ryan Dawson, Austin Kashow, Andrew West and Desirree Woodin. Congratulations seniors! We wish you the best in all of your endeavors.

Holzman "Slow and Steady" Orthodontic Grant Program: This program began just last year and so far has made a great impact. One of WSSB's volunteers saw a need and decided that this was the perfect way to make a difference. He pledged money to help make orthodontics available for students at WSSB. This program helps pay for the portion of orthodontic work that the student's insurance doesn't cover.

So far we've provided funding for: Sarah Bair, Ryan Dawson, Mychal Estrada, Kaylee Riley, and Anthony Thomas. We love seeing your smiling faces around campus!

Braille Book Program: You may recall from the last Lions Roar that we were working to increase the offerings of the WSSB Library. Let me tell you, we have succeeded in that goal. As of last count we had increased the amount of available materials by close to 650 volumes! That's around 300 books. We are so excited to witness the growth of this excellent resource for students.

We love being able to be part of the work done at WSSB. It's very rewarding to be able to make a difference in the lives of children.

Want to make a difference? We'll make it easy! Donations can be made to the WSBF online at www.wsbfl.org.

The Lions Roar Newsletter is produced three times per year at the Washington State School for the Blind, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661-4120. Phone 360-696-6321 Fax 360-737-2120
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WSSB—2009-2010 School Year Events

August	New Employee Orientation Ed Reform Workshop (teachers only) Safety Training/Fall Workshops	August 24 August 26 August 27-28
September	Labor Day Student Registration (no transportation) First Day of School Welcome Students Ice Cream Social Board of Trustees Meeting	September 7 September 8 September 9 September 17 (2:30 pm) September 18-19
October	National Federation of the Blind Convention National White Cane Awareness Day Open House	October 2-4 October 15 October 22 (6:30-8:30 pm)
November	Washington Council of the Blind Convention End of 1 st Quarter Veterans Day Holiday Board of Trustees Meeting Thanksgiving Holiday	November 5-7 November 6 November 11 November 13-14 November 26-27
December	Tree Decorating Winter Holiday Program Winter Holiday	December 1 December 17 December 21-January 1
January	Students returning by bus/air Board of Trustees Conference Call M.L. King's Birthday PAYDAY Assembly Lions Swim Meet End of 2 nd Quarter/1 st Semester	January 3 January 12 January 18 January 27 January 28 January 29

WSSB Board of Trustees

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