



ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION
OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Winter 2018 NEWSLETTER

Message from the President, Amanda English

Happy fall!

It was a crazy busy summer for me and I'm excited to be enjoying my favorite season in Michigan! I had the opportunity to travel to the AER International conference in Reno, NV in July. It was great to see so many Michigan people there and to meet so many talented professionals I've read about in journals and textbooks over the years. In August, I had the opportunity to talk with several students at Western Michigan University about starting a WMU Student Council for MAER. I met with them again in September, and 11 ambitious Masters and Undergrad students officially formed the Student Council of Michigan AER! Congratulations to Abby Tongue the newly elected Student President, Jack Colbry, Student President- Elect, Rachel Pavone, Student Secretary, Lexi Theis, Student Treasurer. The Council is in the process of writing their By-Laws, getting programs figured out for the Kid's Club they are starting and they are working on plans to help recruit more people into our field. I am excited to watch this group grow, learn and make this WMU student organization into something amazing!

Speaking of recruitment, we are looking to form an Outreach Committee. If you are wishing we had more people in our profession to carry on our mission, please consider joining. We are in a critical shortage for professionals in our field (nationwide). Let's spread the word and raise awareness of our incredible professions. This outreach can be as simple as talking at high schools during career explorations, talking to college students at career fairs or whatever you dream up! This committee would earn you ACVREP credits for recertification. You can contact me or any board member to get involved.

Our MAER Board met in September. We are starting to plan our 2019 MAER Conference! We are looking for great presentations again this year, watch for the Call for Papers and get your presentation ready. Mark your calendar: April 25-26 at the Livonia Marriott.

Lastly, we are starting to recruit members to fill board positions in the spring. If you are interested in being a part of our board, please contact me or one of the current board members.

Amanda English
MAER President

ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

Submitted by Amy B. Schreiner, COMS TVI

ADA Education and Reform Act – a brief summary

Many of you may, or may not, remember that earlier this year, Congress passed an updated version of the ADA. It is called the ADA Education and Reform Act. This has done several things to the ADA as it stood. To offer some assistance in sorting these differences out, I thought I'd share a brief summary of the changes and a link to the ACLU website that offers some "Myths and Truths" about the new legislation.

Under the original ADA, if a person with a disability encountered a business where there were architectural barriers to them gaining access to the public building, they had 3 options: they could speak to the business, file a complaint with the Department of Justice or file a lawsuit. With the updated version of the ADA, this same individual who experiences a barrier to access must first speak to the business in writing. The business then has 60 days to acknowledge the letter and determine what they are going to do to address the problem. The business then has another 60 days to actually fix the problem or prove that they are "making progress" on the issue. There is no timeline for when the barrier should be removed. As long as a business is showing that they are "making progress" towards fixing the issue, they cannot be sued. The phrasing being used is rather than providing access to businesses, they need to be making "substantial progress" in removing barriers.

Many say the updated ADA Education and Reform Act was needed because they were told it would save money for businesses who were sued by people with a disability and their lawyers. In the original ADA if a person with a disability sued a business and won, they were entitled to the barrier being removed/rectified and lawyers' fees. Some states did allow damages to be awarded but the original ADA law did not.

Check out this link for more details and myths about the new ADA Education and Reform Act: [American Civil Liberties Union Website](#)

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Submitted by Amy McDonald-Lamiman

I had the good fortune of attending a workshop at AER in July that I enjoyed so much I'd like to share some of my learning with you. Corinna Baurer, PhD is a neuroscientist from Harvard. Corinna shared her research about the extensive reorganization that occurs in the brain when a student has a cerebral visual impairment, CVI. Corinna's team of researchers uses virtual reality goggles with older students with CVI who are able to communicate about their experiences.

The researchers showed the students different visual experiences such as a crowded school hallway where the students had to visually locate their principal. These students were able to easily find the principal when the environment was uncluttered both visually and auditorally. As the "clutter" increased, the students had a much more difficult time.

The researchers also took into account scans of the students' brains when they were viewing the school hallways. When the hallways became increasingly complex, the students "shut off" the auditory portion of their brain so that they could focus on locating their principal.

I was excited by Corinna's thorough research and how it supported the current understanding of CVI. For more information, check out the [Harvard Medical School Department of Ophthalmology Website](#).

Have a wonderful school year!

ACVREP CREDITS

Submitted by Roberta McCall, CVRT, MAER Secretary

EARN ACVREP CREDITS AND POINTS TOWARD YOUR RECERTIFICATION AND HELP MAER AT THE SAME TIME

Just a reminder about some of the ways you can get points toward your ACVREP certification and recertification and help MAER at the same time. The following information was taken from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) [ACVREP Website](#) copyright 2018.

Every five years you must accumulate 100 CE points to be eligible to recertify through ACVREP. ACVREP has four categories to earn your required 100 CE points for ACVREP recertification. Category One: Continuing Education - 25 points minimum; Category Two: Professional Experience - 50 points maximum; Category Three: Publications and Presentations - 50 points maximum; Category Four: Professional Services - 50 points maximum. Additional details are available on the ACVREP website.

Here are some specific activities that involve MAER and can earn you CE points for recertification.

Make a Presentation at the MAER annual conference. You earn 2 points per hour of presentation.

Serve as MAER Chapter board chair, committee chair or officer. Earn 10 points per year of service. If you chair a committee for MAER for one year you get 10 points. If you stay on as chair for five years, you earn 50 points!! If you serve as MAER President Elect/President/Past President, Treasurer, or Secretary, you earn 10 points for each year of service.

Serve as MAER board member or committee member. MAER Board of Directors serve 3-year terms. Each year earns you 5 points. One full term as Director earns you 15 points. You can be re-elected for a second consecutive term as Director. Take a year off after that and serve again. Points can add up!

Write an article for the MAER newsletter. Earn one point for each article. Attend the MAER conferences throughout the years. Each hour you attend earns you 1 point. You must earn at least 25 CE credits from the continuing Education category One for recertification. Most MAER conferences have 11-12 CE points available if you attend the entire conference. There was not a maximum points allowance for this category indicated on the website so you can earn 55-60 CE points just by attending all the sessions of each year's conference during the five years between recertification.

The work is fun and rewarding, and it keeps you in touch with your peers in the world of Blindness professionals.

Come join us and help MAER and yourself!!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MAER 2019 Conference: Meet Me Where I Am--Call for Papers!

Consider sharing a success you have had, a great training you can pass along, results from research, or a group presentation with colleagues, etc., at the upcoming April 25 and 26, 2019 MAER conference! This year we are focusing on meeting our students, clients and our own needs by focusing on where we are currently. Growth can only happen when we understand where we are coming from and where we need to go!

Use the link to submit your proposal. [MAER Call for Presentations Google Link](#)

YOU'RE INVITED!!

Submitted by Roberta McCall, CVRT, MAER Secretary

Note to readers using text-to-speech software: Each occurrence of the word "you" is all caps to emphasize the importance of YOU (all caps) in MAER.

YOUR Board of Directors meets regularly to handle conference planning and the business of YOUR MAER. This is YOUR organization and only works because of volunteers like YOU!! Please consider getting involved in making MAER the best it can be. With your help and involvement and ideas, MAER will be better than ever. We cannot do this alone. YOUR ideas are important and requested.

In addition to the enjoyment of working with YOUR colleagues in the field, YOU also can receive ACVREP points toward certification and recertification. We will provide YOU with verification of YOUR involvement in any MAER activities.

Upcoming meetings are:

November 16, 2018

January 18, 2019

February 15, 2019

March 22, 2019

April 24, 2019

Please contact President Amanda English for further details and to let us know you will be attending so we can welcome YOU!

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Do you have an article, resource, or other information you would like added to the MAER newsletter? Use this opportunity to get information to other members. Please send all ideas to lori@penrickton.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events	Dates	https://aerbvi.org/
MAER Annual Conference "Meet Me Where I Am"	April 25-26, 2019	Livonia, Michigan Please go to Michigan AER website for more information.
Connecting the Dots 2019	February 14-15, 2019	Naperville, Illinois Please go to Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired Website for more information.

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Our AER Mission: To render all possible assistance to the promotion, development and improvement of all phases of education and rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired persons of all ages.