

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



Orientation and Mobility Division Update

Winter 2018

Volume 21 Number 4

FROM THE CHAIR

Hello Orientation and Mobility Division,

We have just completed Thanksgiving and are moving into winter. As the holiday season continues, I am reminded of many things I am grateful for. Among these is belonging to the profession of Orientation and Mobility and the professionals I work with and interact with on a daily basis. We have been present during a time of amazing developments; a second renaissance of science and technology. Many new innovations have come to the field and many more are developing at this time. Most of you are likely using apps in your daily lives, as well as with those you work with as Orientation and Mobility Specialists. Emerging fields of remote assistance, teleservices, and augmented reality solutions are becoming more prevalent in our related fields and have already begun to be practiced in various forms for the delivery and support of instruction in orientation and mobility. 2019 brings with it many new opportunities and I am grateful that we have a network of professionals to share with, learn from, and to develop with. Thank you for being a part of the AER Orientation and Mobility community and working together to learn and grow.

If you have questions, suggestions, comments, or just want to share things related to Orientation and Mobility, you can reach me at tabbc@tsbvi.edu.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the AER Orientation and Mobility Division,
Chris Tabb

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Excellence in Managerial Leadership Award

Laurel Park-Leach received the 2018 Cathy Holden Excellence in Managerial Leadership Award presented by the Vision Serve Alliance at the Vision Serve Alliance Annual Awards Dinner in Portland, Oregon in October. Laurel is Senior Vice President at the Metrolina Association of the Blind in in St, Louis, MO.



William G. Bell Award



The Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility of the Transportation Research Board has awarded the 2018 William G. Bell Award to Dr. Billie Louise (Beezy) Bentzen for her significant contributions to the field of accessible transportation and mobility! She will be presented with the award at TRANSED 2018 in Taiwan in November, and will also be honored her at the TRB Annual Meeting in January.

The Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility of the Transportation Research Board has awarded the 2018 William G. Bell Award to Dr. Billie Louis (Beezy) Bentzen for her significant contributions to the field of accessible transportation and mobility! She was presented with the award at TRANSED 2018 in Taiwan in November, and will also be honored her at the TRB Annual Meeting in January.

Selection criteria for this award:

- 1) Individual has served and made significant contributions to the field of accessible transportation and mobility. Photo of Laurel Park-Leach
- 2) Individual has made outstanding contribution(s) through practice, research, or policy development to the field of accessible transportation and mobility, both nationally and internationally.
- 3) Individual is committed to broadening the number of professionals and disciplines working in the field of accessible transportation and mobility.
- 4) Individual has a demonstrated track record in the dissemination of research findings and practical information.
- 5) Individual has demonstrated accomplishments and a commitment to outreach and training in accessible transportation and mobility.
- 6) Individual possesses the following personal qualities: persistence with grace; dedication to accessible transportation and mobility; persuasiveness, credibility and visibility.
- 7) Individual has demonstrated a dedication to the field of accessible transportation, and mobility.

All of us who know Beezy know that she absolutely deserves this award and her work goes way above and beyond the selection criteria. Congratulations, Beezy!

CEC Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness Distinguished Service Award



CEC announced on its website that Dr. Laura Bozeman was the recipient of 2019 Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Bozeman is Associate Professor & Director of Vision Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, College of Education and Human Development at UMASS Boston.

Retirement Announcement

After 35 years as an O and M instructor Stephanie Doeren-Rasmussen retired July 1st, 2018 from Utah School for the Deaf and Blind. I had a fabulous career with many fond memories, now to make new ones fishing and travelling. AER and the O and M network totally Rock, keep up the good work as we make a difference in so many lives.

Texas Tech University (O&M) Seeking Participants for a Research Study, Survey for Orientation and Mobility Specialists Who are Blind

TTU is seeking O&M specialists who are blind/visually impaired and provide O&M services to individuals who are blind/visually to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to survey O&M specialists who are blind/visually impaired concerning the identification of accommodations, teaching techniques and resources that they use to teach O&M skills to students who are blind/visually impaired. The survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete. If you are interested in participating in this project, please follow the following link for the survey:

https://educttu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9HaiRhZDYNtCyhf or contact Dr. Nora Griffin-Shirley at (806)834-0225 or email her at n.griffin-shirley@ttu.edu).

Nora Griffin-Shirley, Ph.D., Professor
Coordinator of O&M Program
Director, Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education In Sensory Disabilities
Texas Tech University
Box 41071
Lubbock, TX 79409-1071
(806) 834-0225
(806) 742-2326 FAX
n.griffin-shirley@ttu.edu

Environmental Access in the Travel Environment

Orientation and Mobility Professionals spend many hours in the built environment that sometimes seems built for challenges. What can you do when you are working with a client and the sidewalk is in disrepair, detectable warning surfaces (DWS) are in pieces or installed incorrectly, and pedestrian signals are inaccessible to pedestrians with visual impairments?

Requests to repair or install detectable warning surfaces can be relayed to city officials, county employees. Depending on the infrastructure of your community, the responsibility of repairing or installing detectable warning surfaces may fall under the city, county or state. The same holds true when sidewalks are in disrepair.

When requesting Accessible Pedestrian Signals determine if the intersection is a city, county, state or federal road. Then determine who controls the intersection. Sometimes other entities are contracted to maintain signalized intersections such as a city contracting with a county.

Request for Accessible Pedestrian Signals should be initiated by a person with a visual impairment with guidance from an Orientation and Mobility professional. Include within the request, an anticipated time line when a reply is expected such as within the next two weeks. If needed, follow-up with a second letter and determine the hierarchy of your community leaders. Send the second request to a supervisor, ADA Coordinator or County Commissioner.

If Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) are being considered it is imperative that an Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) be installed simultaneously. When there is a LPI, the pedestrian who is blind or who has low vision may enter the crosswalk lane as the vehicles begin moving just when drivers' expectation of pedestrian movement is reduced. If the signal timing is minimal, the pedestrian may still be in the street when the signal changes.

Similar concerns arise when Exclusive Pedestrian Phasing is used. A blind pedestrian will typically traverse an intersection with the parallel surge of traffic, not during the exclusive pedestrian phase. Drivers would not anticipate that a pedestrian would begin crossing during a vehicular phase.

The installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) whenever an LPI or exclusive pedestrian phase is installed can provide the benefit of this new signal timing strategy while mitigating risks to pedestrians who have visual impairments.

O&M specialists should be aware of these issues and educate their clients about these possible signal timing strategies. They and their clients should advocate for the installation of APS when such changes are being made.

The following resources and so much more are available at <https://aerbvi.org/about/divisions/orientation-mobility-division/resources/>

About Accessible Pedestrian Signals

Detectable Warning Surfaces

Guidance through Construction Areas

Design Guidelines for the Visual Environment

Considerations When Requesting an Accessible Pedestrian Signal

Need for Accessible Pedestrian Signals When Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) and Exclusive Pedestrian Phases are Installed

Sample Letter Requesting an Accessible Pedestrian Signal

List of Accessible Pedestrian Signal Manufacturers

The EAC is ready to help you and answer your questions. You can email us at OandMEAC@gmail.com Please let us know what you would like us to do and how we can be more helpful to those of you in the field.

Teaching Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Providing Orientation and Mobility Services for Those Children, and/or Specializing in Assistive Technology for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired

Training for a Rewarding Career Generous Student Financial Assistance

Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, Illinois) offers a nationally regarded program at the graduate level for individuals who wish to join a rewarding career in teaching children who are blind or visually impaired as a teacher of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility instructor, or assistive technology specialist for children with visual impairments. There is an overwhelming need for teachers who specialize in instruction for students who are visually impaired. As a consequence, there are many job opportunities in all regions of the United States. Individuals who choose this career path can anticipate having no difficulty obtaining life-long employment with great job security! In addition to numerous job opportunities, good pay, and excellent job security, individuals who choose this career path experience a sense of fulfillment not commonly found in other careers. These teachers play a significant role in the lives of children who are visually impaired and their families.

Generous student financial assistance is available. We will pay all in-state or out-of-state tuition, all fees, health insurance, and a stipend of \$5,520 per calendar year for qualified individuals who wish to come to Northern Illinois University to enroll in the Visual Disabilities Graduate Program focusing on special education for children who are blind or visually impaired with an additional emphasis in assistive technology.

For more information, go to the following YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUfWnBbNZMg>

Also, go to the following website to read about the program: www.vision.niu.edu

Interested individuals can contact the Project Director, Stacy Kelly (skelly@niu.edu), 815-753-4103

Admissions requirements are as follows:

Online application with a fee of \$60

GRE scores of 30%tile verbal and 30%tile quantitative (\$205 fee)

Official transcripts of all previous academic work

GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale

ACT score of 22 or successful completion of the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)

Two letters of recommendation

Personal statement

The link to the online application process for the Graduate School can be found on the page, www.vision.niu.edu. The direct link to the online application can be found on the page, <https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml>.

This is not an online program. All courses except for the field experiences (e.g., student teaching and the internships) are taken on campus in DeKalb, Illinois, the home of Northern Illinois University.

Students progress through the program in cohorts beginning in the fall of each academic year. The

generous financial assistance is awarded on a first come, first served basis to qualified applicants. Be sure to notify Stacy Kelly of your intent to apply to ensure that your name is included in the pool of candidates!

**Camp VITALL: Visually Impaired and Assistive Technology for ALL
The Summers-Only Assistive Technology Component for Practicing Vision Professionals**

If you are currently licensed/certified as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI), Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), or Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT), you may be eligible to study in the Camp VITALL summers-only program which will prepare you to be eligible for the new ACVREP AT credential (Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for People with Visual Impairments--CATIS) without an interruption in employment!

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity includes full tuition, fees, and a \$920 per summer stipend for two consecutive summer sessions. On-campus courses will take place during an 8-week session starting summer of 2019 (summer 1). A full time, approximately 12-week internship will be completed during the summer of 2020, at any approved site in the contiguous 48 states (summer 2).

Act now if you are interested! This will not be a continual offering; this is cohort opportunity based on federal funding. Be sure to notify Stacy Kelly of your intent to apply as soon as the decision is made to ensure that your name is included in the pool of candidates!

Application deadline for the Summers-Only Assistive Technology Component is **February 1, 2019**. For additional information on the NIU Visual Disabilities Program, please visit our website: www.vision.niu.edu. For the online Graduate School application, please visit the NIU Graduate School Admissions website: <https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml>

The Camp VITALL summers-only program is an opportunity open to certified/licensed TVIs, COMS, and CVRTs. It is designed to enable professionals in the visual disabilities field to earn credentials in the area of Assistive Technology without an interruption in employment as teachers.

Funding is available for Camp VITALL cohort participants to be awarded graduate assistantships which will pay in-state or out-of-state tuition, fees, and a stipend of \$920 for each of the 2 summers of this program. The graduate assistantships will be awarded on a competitive basis (combination of undergraduate GPA, GRE scores, recommendations, etc.).

In order to be awarded a graduate assistantship, students must be fully admitted to The Graduate School at NIU and selected for this federal funding opportunity. Requirements include:

A bachelor's degree from an accredited 4-year institution with a minimum 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale

A passing score on the Graduate Record Exam General Test (verbal and quantitative); and 3 letters of recommendation

In addition, admission to this particular summers-only cohort requires evidence of current certification in the visual disabilities area, as a TVI, COMS, and/or CVRT.

The application process is started with submission of the actual application and a \$60 application fee. This can be accomplished online at the following website: <https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml>.

The 8-week NIU summer session always begins mid-June and ends early/mid-August. In summer 2019 (summer 1), the 8 weeks of summer classes begin June 17 and end August 9. The 2nd summer has to be approximately 12 weeks (in a full-time internship at any approved site in the contiguous 48 states), so has to start mid-May.

Please contact the Project Director, Stacy Kelly, with questions. skelly@niu.edu 815-753-4103

Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) Held Unique Competition for Blind Students

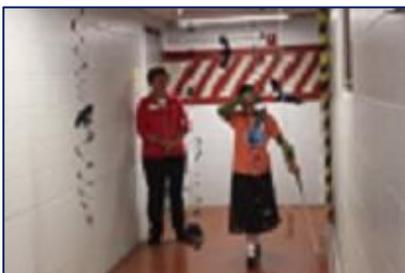
Students from Greater Cincinnati Competed in Local Cane Quest® Mobility Challenge

On **October 20, 2018** the white cane became a tool in a fun yet challenging competition—**Cane Quest, Greater Cincinnati region**. The event was held from **9am-2pm** at **CABVI, 2045 Gilbert Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202**.



Created by **Braille Institute of America, Inc.**, Cane Quest® is a national competition that tests the ability of blind and visually impaired youngsters to navigate the world around them independently and safely. This event motivates students to master their mobility skills, while also educating the sighted public about the abilities of blind youth to travel independently. The participants were awarded special prizes at an awards ceremony at the end of the competition.

Three winners in separate categories based on level of vision loss. Breannah McNutt is from Middletown, Eunice Lopez-Santos is from Cincinnati and attends the Northwest School District, Damian Nowlin is from Hamilton.



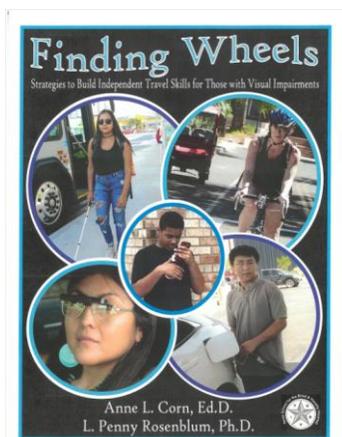
Teacher of the Visually Impaired Cindy Goetz observes Eunice Lopez-Santos using her arm in front of her face as a protective technique.

Orientation and Mobility Instructor Will Horton walks with Noah Hibbard who is using his white cane at the “Around the Block” station.



A New Tool to Assist Travelers to “Find Their Wheels”

L. Penny Rosenblum, rosenblu@email.arizona.edu
Anne L. Corn anne123c@gmail.com



If you stop for a minute to think about how our travel experiences have changed in the last 20 years, it is pretty amazing! We had many chuckles as we began work on the revision of *Finding Wheels*, a curriculum we published in 2000 to support professionals in guiding their high school students to build skills as nondrivers. After all, when was the last time you made sure your student had quarters for the pay phone or carried his tape recorder on which he pre-recorded travel directions? At a time when “Uber” was neither a noun nor a verb in our vocabulary, travel skills those with visual impairments needed to develop in order to be independent differed significantly from those needed by travelers in 2019.

When Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired agreed to work with us on a revision of the original *Finding Wheels*, we knew there was much to do. We quickly understood that more than a revision was called

for. *Finding Wheels: Strategies to Build Independent Travel Skills for Those with Visual Impairments* is written for the traveler. We define travelers as those in high school or their early 20s who will be nondrivers or potential low vision drivers. We include information for professionals and family members throughout *Finding Wheels*.

Like in our first version of the book, travelers read scenarios of those with visual impairments to explore the diverse ways people approach nondriving, and in Kendra’s case low vision driving. Each chapter of *Finding Wheels* has objectives for the traveler followed by up-to-date information on topics, for example, using rideshare services, the role of technology in travel, interacting with drivers, bicycling with low vision, safety during travel, and transportation budgets. Throughout the 10 chapters of *Finding Wheels*, we include short vignettes to illustrate content. Those in the vignettes are representative of different types of communities and skill levels.

Sixteen activities are included to aid travelers in applying and expanding the information they learn through the material shared in *Finding Wheels*. The directions for the activities are written to the traveler and guide the traveler through the activity. Activity topics include exploring rights of passage, evaluating transportation options in the community, exploring low vision driving, role playing, and interviewing others with visual impairments about their travel experiences.

A new feature of *Finding Wheels* are pieces on various topics written by five individuals. Chris Tabb, a COMS at TSBVI provides a wealth of information on technology as it relates to travel. Dr. Molly Pasely shares information about driver’s education and considerations for those with visual impairments. Three first-hand accounts, one from a low vision driver named Matt Bailey and the other two from parents of travelers, Tawni Holland and Meagan McCormick, enrich the content of *Finding Wheels*.

We are excited that *Finding Wheels* will be available in summer 2019 for travelers, their families, and professionals. So that you are kept up-to-date on the availability of *Finding Wheels*, please send Penny Rosenblum an email and ask to be added to our mailing announcement list. Penny’s email address is rosenblu@email.arizona.edu.

Space University Vis-U Report

Houston Space Center

Manned Space Flight Education Foundation

By Gail Henrich

First, I would like to express my gratitude for the financial support from the Virginia Space Grant Consortium (VSGC) and the Virginia Association for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VA AER) to attend VIS-U, a Houston Space University pilot program for students who are blind and visually impaired.

VIS-U, a conceptual, pilot program developed by Stephanie McMahon, Accessibility and Inclusion Specialist and Senior Lead Instructor at Space Center Houston, Manned Space Flight Education Foundation, was an extremely successful and phenomenal experience for the 9 students, 8 from Texas and 1 from Virginia, who had the opportunity to attend this pilot program. Stephanie created the 3-day program with fantastic insight to the needs of students who are blind and visually impaired. In addition to the two Houston education staff members, Stephanie brought in the following individuals who volunteered in various capacities with the students and program: Dr. Cassandra Runyon, Director of the South Carolina Space Grant Consortium, Caitlin Nolby, Deputy Director of the North Dakota Space Grant Consortium, Marissa Saad, Coordinator, North Dakota Space Grant Consortium, Emily K. Stenberg, Librarian/Volunteer Coordinator at the North Dakota School for the Blind, and myself, Gail Henrich, Teacher for Students with Visual Impairment and Orientation & Mobility Specialist, Norfolk Public Schools, Virginia. Two parents also attended the 3-day program.

The student's had binders for the program which were in large print and they had access to an iPad. When instructional presentations on rocketry, thermodynamics, cryogenics and other topics were made, the Nearpod app was used. This allowed the instructor to share their live session on the projector screen that students could view the on their iPad by entering a code. Nearpod was used throughout the three days. Other accommodations were made that allowed the students to access all activities. The students were in groups of three for the entire program. Team names were Apollo, Ladee, Curiosity and Pathfinder was the group of the two parents who attended.

Day 1

The first day started with a tour of Starship Gallery. Dr. Runyon was ready to go with tactile graphics she previously made for the students of some of the exhibits we were to visit in the museum. In the classroom, all introduced themselves. The students readily talked about their visual impairment to the group. None of the students were totally blind but did have low vision and considered to be legally blind. Some of the students' visual impairments included ocular albinism, retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt's disease, and retinopathy of prematurity. One student also had cerebral palsy. A few of the students had long canes.

Dr. Runyon shared her two new tactile books "A Feel for Craters", with the students. Gail Henrich discussed tactile graphics in general and how to read a tactile graphic. We continued with an introduction to Rocketry, Thermodynamics & Cryogenics. Students made their rockets for tomorrow's launch and had a hands-on, upclose look at the launch box that would be used. Rocket math was also explained by Bob.

Day 2

In preparation of the rocket launch, each team assigned their own duties: one would be the rocket launcher, one would take altimeter readings and the other would record readings and anything that might happen during the launch. Each team member took their role in the rocket launch seriously. They were so excited for this activity. It was a bright, sunny day, so umbrellas for shade were provided for the students that were light sensitive. The rocket launch was a success!

When we arrived back to the classroom, the students had a very special speaker from NASA. Dr. Robert Shelton, with NASA since 1971, is a lead simulation engineer in the Simulation and Graphics Branch at Johnson Space Center. Among his other contributions, Dr. Shelton continues to improve JEOD and serves as an expert on orbital dynamics and other areas of mathematical modeling. Dr. Shelton also happens to be blind, having lost his sight at age 11. The students were totally enthralled with Dr. Shelton as he shared his story and accomplishments. He also demonstrated MathTrax and the Math Description Engine (MDE) algorithm he developed which analyzes, describes and sonifies equations and data to provide alternative accessibility for students who are blind or visually impaired. He also discussed Latex for math. Dr. Shelton stayed to have lunch with the students before returning to work.

After lunch, the teams made their lunar landers and coded their cars to tomorrow's Vex Coding challenge. Even though the students were in teams, their willingness to help non-team members was amazing to watch.

Day 3

This event-driven day started off with the Vex coding competition on a pre-set track by the instructors. The most challenging obstacle was climbing the hill, which was very near the end of the track. Though not one team was able to get across the finish line, they all cheered each other on. Afterwards, the wheels were turning in their heads of how they could have coded differently.

This was followed by another fantastic speaker, Paul Boehm with the NASA Orion Program. His presentation was titled "So You Want to Go to Mars?" Paul's background was with the space suits and he had worked at Mission Control. The students were fascinated with his description of the systems that would have to be accomplished to get to Mars which included the space suit technology, robotics, rover planning to have a little helicopter on it, communication obstacles and of course, food. Paul brought parts of space suits, like inner and outer gloves, boots and the like.

Then it was on to have brunch with a retired astronaut, Col. Brian Duffy, USAF. Duffy was selected by NASA in June, 1985, became an astronaut in 1986 and is a veteran of four space flights. His story and own inspirations mesmerized the students.

Back in the classroom, the teams conducted their Sphero Drop, Heat Shield Test and Cryogenic Marshmallow Test. This all ended with a special treat of nitrogen ice cream. Stephanie also arranged to have some devices and suits from actual space crafts for the students to touch.

Graduation finally arrived. Many of the other parents, family and friends attended the graduation. There were awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each testing competition, Overall winner and a special medal for teamwork, dedication, and efforts. Students hugged each other and exchanged phone numbers to keep in touch. A Rocket Park Tour was provided for those who wished to go.

Afterwards, Dr. Runyon and I were able to talk with William T. Harris, Space Center Houston President and CEO. We shared how this pilot program enabled students with visual impairments to participate fully

in specialized STEM programs, and maybe inspiring a few students to consider careers in the space science realm. Mr. Harris was in total support of this endeavor. Cass and I shared with him that this program could be a model to other venues around the country. He is willing to be a resource to support this effort.

Stephanie McMahon's design of this pilot program was outstanding. The team building activities, presentations, information and hands-on experiences all supported the mission of VIS-U. I was able to recommend additional accommodations that furthered the students' ability to independently access this phenomenal program. The opportunities offered to the students and what they experienced will go far beyond the walls of Houston Space Center.

<https://spacecenter.org/space-center-u/visual-impairment-program/>
<https://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/duffy.html>

DISTRICT REPORTS

District 3 – Maggie Winn

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ontario and Wisconsin

Illinois

Illinois AER Conference

The 2019 IAER Conference “**Connecting the Dots**” will be held February 14-15, 2019 at the Chicago Marriot in Naperville.

1801 North Naper Boulevard
Naperville, Illinois 60563

With an annual attendance of approximately 300 participants, the Illinois AER conference is one of the largest gatherings in the nation specifically for professionals who work in the field of low vision and blindness. We hope you will join us for this year's conference event.

Registration: Please click on the following link for participant registration and exhibitor registration: <http://iaerconfreg.com/>

Accommodations: A room block has been reserved at the Chicago Marriott Naperville at a special rate of \$124.00 per night.

Youth Programs at the Chicago Lighthouse

Youth Transition Program/Teens and Young Adults

At The Chicago Lighthouse, we create a nurturing environment that supports people who are blind and vision impaired in all areas of life. Our Youth Transition Program provide teens and young adults (ages 15 – 24) with the tools they need for independence. We host a variety of experiences designed for youth who intend to live independently, seek competitive employment, and/or attend a vocational training program or college upon graduation from high school. We'll work with each participant to address his or her individual needs and challenges.

FIRST JOBS Summer PROGRAM

This unique vocational program combines classroom learning, on-site orientation and paid work experience for youth who are blind or vision impaired. During the first week, students attend classes on resume writing, career planning, disability disclosure, nonverbal communication skills, self-advocacy, conflict resolution and mock interviewing. An orientation and mobility specialist helps each student orient to his or her workplace. Together with the team, First Jobs participants learn to function confidently and independently in their jobs. For the next six weeks, they will work at a designated site as paid intern employees, with the possibility for competitive employment.

SUMMER IN THE CITY

Summer in the City is a five-day residential program designed to assist youth who are blind or visually impaired as they learn and practice basic life skills. By combining life-skill lessons with adventures and socialization, students overcome their hesitations and fears. Summer in the City youth spend the week living in a dorm environment in Chicago, where they attend daily classes in technology, mobility, communications, fitness and daily living skills. During the afternoons and evenings, participants travel throughout the city on foot, as well as by bus and train, to explore Chicago's many attractions, such as Wrigley Field, Shedd Aquarium and the Lincoln Park Zoo. They also enjoy theater, boating, indoor skydiving, and rock climbing, while sampling a variety of cuisines in Chicago's many restaurants. Students make lasting friendships as they connect and bond with peers who experience the same challenges.

For more information, please contact:

Shelle Hamer

Manager, Youth Transition Program

(847) 510-2055/cell: 847-508-0600

Shelle.hamer@chicagolighthouse.org

Indiana

Bosma Enterprises will be hosting an information session from Guide Dogs for the Blind. 12-15 participants will be accepted. The dates are April 3-5, 2019. For information, please contact Bill Noll at BillN@Bosma.org

Save the Date!

Indiana AER will be holding the upcoming Indiana Conference in June of 2019 in Indianapolis, IN.

Check the link below for updates.

<https://www.in-aer.net/2019-conference>

Michigan

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 below to submit your proposal.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CFrYPcRxaWx5Jwaqm4IEYCgY54mN_GzZgD35ni-I6Is/edit

Save the Date!

Kalamazoo RESA will be hosting the annual West Michigan SWAP meet on Friday, March 15.

MAER Outreach and Recruitment Committee

MAER is looking for individuals who would like to be part of the Outreach and Recruitment Committee. Participants in this committee can earn ACVREP credit for their services.

MAER Student Council

MAER has created a Student Council of MAER at Western Michigan University. The president is Abby Tongue. Students are finishing creating their bylaws and will soon be starting a kid's club along with working on recruitment of new individuals for the field.

Programs at Leader Dog

Leader Dogs for the Blind is accepting client applications for Orientation and Mobility, a one-week program that allows your clients to enhance their skills, and then continue training with their local COMS upon their return home. For more information, visit <https://www.leaderdog.org/programs/accelerated-om-training/>

Leader Dogs for the Blind Summer Experience Camp will be held Saturday, June 22–Saturday, June 29, 2019. Applications for 2019 are now available and due by March 31, 2019 individuals who will be 16 or 17 during the dates of camp. Summer Experience Camp is a unique summer camp for boys and girls ages 16 and 17 who are legally blind combining summer fun, independent travel skill training, leadership development, an introduction to guide dogs and the opportunity to spend time with peers facing similar challenges. Follow the link below for more information.

<http://www.leaderdog.org/clients/programs/summer-experience-camp>

SPRING COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Spring into the Future is a free, unique college exploration experience that will be held at Rochester College in Rochester Hills. The program is for Michigan students ages 16–19, who are blind or have a significant visual impairment, and will be graduating or have recently graduated from high school. The program combines career exploration, leadership development, college readiness, and orientation and mobility training for navigating challenging college campus environments. Attendees live on campus during the program.

To talk to someone about Spring into the Future, contact client services at Leader Dogs for the Blind at 888.777.5332.

Program Dates: March 31–April 3, 2019

Application Deadline: February 15, 2019

Students who are not a current client with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) need to sign up with the Bureau. Please contact Sharon McVoy at 269.337.3449 for more information regarding BSBP.

This free program is provided in cooperation with the Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Rochester College and Leader Dogs for the Blind.

Wisconsin

Collaborative Vision 2019

When: May 9-10, 2019

Where: Stevens Point, WI

Who: For professionals working with children or adults who are blind or visually impaired.

For more information, contact Kari Landis at klandis@lincweb.org

Minnesota

The Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss in Duluth, MN has upcoming camps for Transition age youth (14-21). <https://www.lcfvl.org/transition>

This year's School Year Transition Program has two main focuses: 1) Orientation and mobility, especially city travel; 2) technology skills for college and career

Tentative dates are as follows:

January 19-21st, in the Twin Cities Arrive Saturday at noon and depart Monday by 2pm

April 5th-7th, at the Lighthouse, Arrive Friday by 3pm and depart Sunday at Noon, Student programming only

June 8-10, At the Lighthouse, Arrive Saturday at 3pm and depart Monday at noon, Student programming only, except there will be a parent programming brunch and graduation ceremony Monday morning

If you are interested, please fill out the Short Lighthouse Application <http://lcfvl.org/transition> to let us know of your interest

Contact your state counselor to inform them of your possible interest.

For more information on the School-Year Transition Program, call (218) 624-4828.

Division Executive Committee

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Visit the O&M website for a list of Committees: <https://aerbvi.org/oandmdivision>

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Next newsletter submission deadline: March 1, 2019

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