



The Lions Roar



THE LIONS ROAR

July 2016

Superintendent Update

By Scott McCallum, Superintendent

Greetings! At just over a month in the Superintendent's office, I am certainly past due on formally introducing myself. I am both humbled and honored to serve as the eleventh Superintendent of the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB).

Much like the previous Superintendent, Dr. Dean Stenehjem, my roots are in North Dakota. While I spent a majority of my formative years in the suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota, I was born in North Dakota and returned to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of North Dakota (UND). I also completed my certification as a teacher of students who are blind or visually impaired (TVI) at UND.



Scott McCallum

My professional journey began in Oregon as I spent the first eleven years working as an itinerant TVI and, eventually, as an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist after I completed my Master's Degree in O&M at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. I loved that job! I enjoyed working with a diverse population of students with an even more diverse set of needs. I especially enjoyed the close working relationships that I was able to develop with the children I served as well as their family members. It didn't take long to become clear that "it takes a village" to successfully support students at nearly every level.

After about 10 years as a teacher, I decided to pursue an administrative credential through the University of Oregon with the hope that I might earn an administrative position aligned with my passion and expertise related to the education of students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI). It wasn't long before I was fortunate to acquire a position with Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESA) as the Low Incidence Regional Program Blind/Visually Impaired Services Coordinator and the Manager of the Oregon Blind and Visually Impaired Student Fund (BVIS). In this position I was charged with coordinating the specialized services from TVI and O&M Specialists to students in 20 districts across four counties in northwest Oregon. I also had the wonderful responsibility of managing the legislatively created BVIS Fund to meet the needs of students who are BVI from all parts of Oregon. This job, as I often referred, was the best job in the state for anyone interested in the education of students who are BVI. I especially enjoyed working with the variety of stakeholders who advised how the funds should be used to meet student needs as was intended by the bill (HB 2834) that closed the Oregon School for the Blind and created the BVIS Fund in 2009. So many people contributed to the great work

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People can now connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. WSSB posts updates to these sites which include daily happenings, activities, inclement weather updates, kudos, and other fun and important information.

To stay updated, you can find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/sc h4blind> and Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/sch4 blind>.



Superintendent Update (*continued*)

By Scott McCallum, Superintendent

that was done on behalf of students and I left knowing that the work will continue. After six years in this role at NWRESA, I left for a chance to lead the WSSB.

As the new Superintendent, I am honored to be able to follow Dr. Dean Stenehjem. Dr. Stenehjem was a visionary leader who set WSSB up for continued success. I was fortunate to have about a month to work with Dr. Stenehjem before he officially retired at the end of June. I have spent the past month with Dean meeting with local, regional, state, and national stakeholders of WSSB. It has been a whirlwind of experiences, though I have truly appreciated the warm welcome and support from everyone. While it is clear that there is work to be done and my promise to everyone is that I will always do my best to lead, I feel that it is appropriate to close this initial greeting with a public appreciation.

Thank you, Dr. Stenehjem, for everything you have done for WSSB, blind Washingtonians, and for your contribution to education of students who are BVI across the country.

Scott McCallum

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. -Helen Keller

News from Irwin—2016 Graduates!

By Sean McCormick, Principal



Nathaniel Aaron Baker from Camas, WA

Nathaniel attended WSSB for 12 years. His future goals include attend Clark College in the fall.



Heather Sierra Simmons from Vancouver, WA. Heather attended WSSB for 5 years. Her future goals include attending Clark County Skill Center next year and graduate from their Information Technology Program.



Alexann Tureman from Walla Walla, WA. Alexann attended WSSB for 7 years. Her future goals include attending Walla Walla Community College in the fall and to graduate from their Physical Therapy Assistant Program.

Short Course Programs coming Fall of 2016

By Sean McCormick, Principal

The WSSB is proud to offer new short-course programs in specific areas of need for blind and visually impaired (BVI) students. These courses will be offered **free of charge** for Washington students, starting in the fall of 2016.

Courses will last one week and students will stay on campus with WSSB students. Courses will include a mandatory recreation exposure, emphasis on self-determination and self-advocacy, self-management, as well as a focus on transition after high school. In addition, short-course programs will include a dedicated portion of the day for students to work on their classwork they miss while attending the program.

Who is eligible:

Middle and high school students at or near grade level. For technology sessions, students who have the ability to touch-type. Students will receive instruction from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and/or Certified Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist

For more information, contact Corey Grandstaff at corey.grandstaff@wssb.wa.gov or at 360-947-3354.

Course offerings for 2016-17 school year:

September 12-16: Using JAWS in the Classroom.

October 3-7: Living independently through Cooking.

October 24-28: Preparing for College after High School.

November 14-18: O&M, Public Transportation.

December 12-16: Google in the Classroom.

January 9-13: Using Office in the Classroom (Focus on Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

January 30-February 3: Voiceover and the iPad in the Classroom.

February 21-24: STEM in Education, focus on reading tactile graphics, and Accessible Computer Programming.

March 13-17: Career focus, Self-advocacy, and Self-Determination (Career fair participation is a mandatory component of this program).

April 10-14: Low Vision Techniques and Devices.

April 24-28: Outdoor Science Camp (additional fee and contingent on space availability).

May 15-19: Living Independently through Home Management, Focus on Cleaning, Laundry, and Self-Management.

June 5-9: Social Skills for Students who are BVI.

Reunited!

By Adrienne Fernandez, Recreation/Volunteer Coordinator

How many years does it take for a full circle to be made?

In the case of Pam Parker and Jake Koch (pictured at the right) it has taken 25 years. Pam began teaching Jake in pre-school, continuing through Junior High. Jake returned to his teacher this week to teach Pam's summer school students all about Guide Dogs for the Blind and what it means to have a guide dog.



Outreach—Facilitating Students' Access to Education

By Emily Coleman, Director of Outreach/State Vision Consultant

Our Outreach Department has completed the 2015-16 school year. During this year, we've served about 240 students directly each month and an additional 30-45 were given direct technology support monthly. 13 teachers, 3 braillists, and 1 technology consultant served our students. As the vision service needs increase within Washington, our staff and students served will also continue to rise.

In April, almost all of our teachers attended the Pacific NW AER Conference and some of them presented. Sessions included a focus on students with visual impairments and additional needs, technology, teamwork, and orientation and mobility. Professional development continues to be important for our team.

As the Outreach Director, I had the opportunity to visit all of our staff throughout the state this spring. I observed thoughtful braille lessons, technology consultations, mobility lessons, and even spent some time at the WSSB Track Meet. The emphasis on fa-

ilitating access to education was seen throughout all the work our Outreach team provides daily.

During our yearend meeting, we shared some of our expectations for students who are blind/visually impaired (BVI). One teacher said, "My overall expectation for each of my BVI students is that each will improve, and more importantly, they will play an increasing role in determining their own future participation...in life." Another simply stated, "My expectations are they participate in school just like all the other students."

Each expectation shared was thoughtful, progress-centered, and meant to push our students towards greater independence. Our teachers spend every day in Washington school districts facilitating and determining equitable access to education for students who are BVI. Because of that, this year was a success, and we look forward to an even better 2016-2017 school year.

WSSB Summer School Fun!

By Adrienne Fernandez, Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator

WSSB hosted a summer school/camp June 26-July 1, and 25 students attended. Here are some pictures from the camp:



Emerge Interactive

By Adrienne Fernandez, Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator

Emerge Interactive closed their office and took the day off on June 9 to come out and have a day of fun with our students. Emerge Interactive, together with the Northwest Association for Blind Athletes (NWABA) and WSSB Tandem Captains, offered WSSB students an enjoyable morning of making new friends, tandem cycling, kayaking, paddle boarding and kickball at Vancouver Lake.

Below are words from Aubrey Jensen and Emerge Interactive team members regarding their day of volunteering for tandem, kayaking, paddle boarding and kickball the last week of school:

Accessibility is something near and dear to our hearts at Emerge Interactive. Our team was looking for an opportunity to spend time in the local community learning from the people who are impacted everyday by the choices we make as creators of content, websites, and applications. We were looking to really experience why thinking about accessibility is so vital in providing information to people in all communities or demographics. This was our chance to spend time with some amazing kids, learning from them and assisting them with their fun, end of the year excursion. However, the experience at WSSB offered so much more than that. The kids are truly amazing and changed how we all now experience the world around us. It is something we will never forget and look forward to working with the WSSB again!

"The kids at WSSB changed how I look at life — adopting their perspective that life is best lived fearlessly with courage, gratitude, and a level of empathy that is at once refreshing and inspiring." - Damon Gaumont

"I was completely touched and inspired by the kids and the staff at WSSB. I love the feeling I get when I remember that day. Thank You!" - Joe Watkins

"The experience with the kids and staff of WSSB opened my eyes and my heart. I have never seen such incredible strength, trust and commitment. I was there to give back but in the end I felt like I received the biggest gift of all. Thank you!" - Jonathon Hensley

"I had an incredible experience interacting with many students. I was completely floored with the positive and engaging attitudes of all the students. They were super fun to interact with and seemed to really enjoy all the activities. I had a lot of fun taking a few of the students on quick kayak trips, and they were keen to go fast and not turn around. It was an absolute pleasure to participate that day, and I look forward to returning again for another volunteer outing. Thank you WSSB for all you do!" - Nate Webb



Ogden Resource Center (ORC) Update

By Jennifer Fenton, Director, ORC

Washington Correctional Center for Women (WCCW) Update: It has been a busy few months for the braille program at WCCW.

The program was featured on King 5 news. One of the featured stories is available at <http://www.king5.com/news/local/prisoners-transcribe-textbooks-into-braille/97497719>. An article was also written about the program, available at <http://www.washingtonci.com/about-ci/news-events/news-archive/braille-anniversary.html>.

Special guests from the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) including 2 fellows from Tunisia and Egypt toured the braille program at WCCW along with Dr. Stenehjem and Jennifer Fenton.

ORC Braille Access Center: Mike Sivill drafted the new Unified English Braille (UEB) exam to replace the BLUE. The exam is currently in the pilot phase and should be available to everyone sometime this summer.

Angela Vargas taught a tactile graphic class with Dr. Holly Lawson this summer to graduate students from Portland State University (PSU).

ORC Instructional Resource Center: At AER in Spokane, Dr. Dean Stenehjem and Jennifer Fenton facilitated a focus group session about the future of the ORC. There is a great need for technology in the classroom and many participants want to see Washington State take a pro-active approach to getting assistive technology in the classroom. The ORC will continue working with Outreach and other departments to help meet this need.

Orders for new materials and returns of materials have been steady. Due to price increases effective May 1, many people submitted their braille and large print orders early.

Other ORC News: Fort Vancouver Regional Library arranged a tour of the ORC and WSSB for visiting Chinese librarians. The librarians were extremely impressed with how braille is created and enjoyed touring Sensory Safari.



Customer Service at the ORC:

The ORC received an unusual request from a customer. He wanted a tactile picture of his dog, Dexter. Thanks to an extraordinary tactile artist, staff were able to provide him with a detailed tactile picture of Dexter. He loved it so much that he said the ORC will receive a bonus for a job well done! He expected a few dots outlining Dexter, instead he received a fully detailed collage picture. (see photos)



Recreation Highlights

By Adrienne Fernandez, Recreation/Volunteer Coordinator

The WSSB Recreation department is always finding fun and exciting things for students to participate in. Some of this year's highlights are listed below:



Tuesday evenings open swim!



Our Chefs came out in full force for our annual Chef and Student Pie Making Event (Jody, Ella, Judge Frank and Sergio in the back row)



NWABA made a big splash with paddle boarding on Vancouver Lake



Children's Golf Course provided a wonderful golf experience for our students this spring with the help of our faithful volunteer John Bannan



Annual Cross Country ski trip



Hikes are always fun with volunteer Jim leading the way

Residential Life Update

By Lori Pulliam, Director of Residential

Residential:

The fourth quarter remained as busy as the rest of the school year. There was camp in early April, and students enjoyed some new recreation events scheduled by Adrienne Fernandez, Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator; fencing, archery and yoga. Sculpting and golf continued for another successful year.

Our monthly themed Daily Living Skills programs were: March–Budgeting and financial management geared age appropriately for our younger and older students; April–Home Management with home cleaning skills learned and practiced as well as simple home maintenance tasks and May–De-Stressing in which students practiced mindfulness, taking your emotional temperature and using calming techniques, and practicing yoga along with other healthy ways to de-stress.

Staff and students are gearing up for all of the end of the year activities, as well as preparation for the upcoming summer programs. Two Residential Life Counselor's (RLC's) have completed the transitioning to UEB Braille course through Hadley, others are working on the new UEB contracted Braille course.

Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT): The fourth quarter in LIFTT has also brought the usual end of the program activity. Students were highly motivated and worked through our annual spring unit on “out on my own” which entails learning all the steps involved in finding and moving into your own apartment. They all plan to remain in the Vancouver area at the completion of the program so the unit is very real to them. Two students will continue on in their post-secondary education programs, one student will enter a post-secondary training program soon and one student just became employed full time. Students are busy finishing off all the skills they have been working on before the program closes for the year on June 17. Successes for all. LIFTT has accepted five students for the upcoming year, and also has a couple of referrals pending.

Health Center: We currently have 8 students participating in the self-directed medication plan. We have one student carrying her own emergency medicine to and from classes at nearby high school, Hudson's Bay. This is very important step toward independence and potentially lifesaving for her. In the event Hudson's Bay were to go into “lock down,” this student carries with her properly labeled medication she can self-administer if needed.

Most of the staff who received Fitbits or Misfits through our employee wellness program are using them to track their activity. The Health Center has sponsored several contests and have good staff participation. It's wonderful to see people so excited and motivated to be physically active and they are wonderful role models for our students. Our last Wellness Challenge will occur in late May-early June.

The Health Center Nurses are partnered with Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency as a “Point of Distribution” or POD in the event of a health crisis that required medication be delivered to large numbers of people in a short time period. WSSB Nurses have agreed to distribute emergency medication to students, student's families, staff, staff families and local blind and visually impaired community members.

Other: Through a partnership with the Department of Services of the Blind (DSB), WSSB hired a Youth Services Specialist to provide pre-employment training services to our transition age youth in SW Washington. Marcie Ebarb joined our team in May, coming to us with experience in providing these services as a staff member at the Braille Institute in Orange County CA. Marcie joins 3 other Youth Services Specialists in the state located in Spokane, Seattle and Tacoma. We are very excited to develop and grow this opportunity to provide more opportunities for our students to develop employment readiness skills.

2016-2017

Upcoming Events

August	Birth-3 Parent Workshop Staff Training and Workshops Student Registration / First Day of School (no transp.) Welcome Students Ice Cream Social	August 5-6 August 24 August 29 August 29
September	Labor Day Board of Trustees Meeting	September 5 September 16 (11am-4pm)
October	National White Cane Awareness Day National Federation of the Blind Convention End of 1 st Quarter	October 13 October 14-16 October 28
November	Washington Council of the Blind Convention Veterans Day Holiday Board of Trustees Meeting Thanksgiving Holiday	November 3-5 November 11 November 18 (11am-4pm) November 21-25
December	Winter Holiday Program WSSB Open House Winter Holiday	December 15 December 15 December 19-January 3

WSSB Board of Trustees

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WSSB Ex-Officio Members

- Teachers: Open
- WA Council of the Blind: Joleen Ferguson, 129 W. Chestnut St, Walla Walla, WA 99362, (509) 529-3415
- WFSE Local #1225: Scott Hone, 2214 East 13 Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321
- National Federation of the Blind of WA: Mike Freeman, 3101 NE 87 Ave, Vanc., WA 98662, (360) 576-5965
- Parent Representative: Lilly Longshore, 2705 NE 115th Street, Vancouver, WA 98686, (360) 991-5013

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