

E-CONNECTOR

News from Colorado Parents of Blind Children (CO-POBC)

Inside this issue:

- BRAILLE AND PRINT:
The Best of Both
Worlds
- BELL: A Summer
Braille Camp for Kids
- BELL VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED
- PHAMALY'S THE
VELVETEEN RABBIT
- CHERRY CREEK SNEAK
- SPRING SCIENCE
SEMINAR
- CALENDAR OF
UPCOMING EVENTS



BRAILLE AND PRINT: The Best of Both Worlds

Most children read print easily and without physical strain, whereas children with “low vision” often read print slowly while hunched over the book, with their noses close to the page. The teacher suggests Braille as a secondary reading medium...a tool that will give the low vision child the best of both worlds, but the parents balk. Why do some parents reject the idea of Braille as a secondary reading medium for their children? The answers to this question are varied, but often include some of the following:

1. Fear of the word “Blind” and misconceptions about what it means to be blind.

Response----Braille is empowering and helps build self-esteem. Being able to read at the same level and ability as one’s peers is an equalizer.

Struggling with print and falling behind can be crushing to the spirit and to the joy of learning.

2. The false idea that Braille is difficult to learn.

Response----Braille is not difficult to learn...it’s all in the attitude and approach to learning. If parents and teachers are on board and enthusiastic, and if they insist on consistent practice and use of Braille, it will become a valuable, irreplaceable literacy tool.

3. The mistaken belief that Braille is outmoded and can be replaced by technology.

Response----In fact, Braille and technology are both valuable and one will not replace the other. For example, thanks to technology, Braille is now highly portable. A book can be stored on a small memory stick and read on a computer device with a refreshable Braille output. The technology to allow Braille keyboard input on an iPhone is now available with an app called [BrailleTouch](#). Braille will not be left behind, but will allow blind and low vision Braille users to access

Editor’s Note: Please feel free to contact us if you have an announcement you would like included in the newsletter or if you would like to add a friend or family member to the e-mail list. Direct all communications to: copobc@gmail.com, attention Julie Hunter, editor.

mainstream technology more easily than ever before.

A final word: Here is a testimonial from an adult who wrote about her experiences as a low vision child learning to read. This is taken from a *Future Reflections* article (vol. 15, no. 1) titled "Braille Or Print: Why The Debate?" by Jody W. Ianuzzi

"I consider myself to have been functionally illiterate for most of my life! When I was growing up as a blind child in the public school system, I didn't have to learn Braille; I could read print. I was a high partial, and with my nose in the book I could read my first grade primer. It was work, but I could make out the letters. By the fourth grade the print began to get smaller, so I had to try even harder. In the seventh grade I was assigned to remedial reading classes because my reading speed was still at the third grade level. In high school I got all my work done; it just took me four times as long as my classmates. I am thirty-eight years old, and I am now learning Braille. It isn't a difficult task; memory is reinforced by using the signs. I love Braille! My reading time and speed are not limited as they are in print. I find Braille to be a refreshing experience with endless possibilities."

Accepting Braille as the primary reading medium for a low vision child will open the doors

to literacy and allow the child to compete on an equal basis with his or her sighted peers.

Be a **Braille Booster Parent...Loud and Proud!**
Your child will thank you!



BELL: A Summer Braille Camp for Kids

The BELL Program, a project of the NFB Jernigan Institute, is a two week day camp experience for blind and visually impaired children ages 4-12. Officially the letters B.E.L.L. stand for "Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning", but for the kids, the letters stand for F.U.N.

Both beginners and more accomplished Braille readers will gain confidence in reading and writing while engaged in games, crafts and exciting outdoor activities. There will be two BELL camps this year. The BELL program in Colorado Springs is being held from June 17 through June 27, 2013 on the campus of Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind (CSDB). The second BELL camp will be held in Westminster area from July 15 through July 26, 2013 at the Rocky Mountain MS Center, which is located at 8845 Wagner Street.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO APPLY FOR THE 2013 BELL PROGRAM.

The programs will be led by certified Braille teachers as well as others who love Braille and use it every day. There is no cost to attend, but families will be encouraged to volunteer at least one day during the programs. Cash donations will also be appreciated. Transportation to and from the camps will be the family's responsibility. Space is limited, so call soon to request an application. For more information contact program coordinator, Diane McGeorge, at 303-321-4268 or email- rmcgeorge@comcast.net, or Michelle Chacon at mchacon@adams50.org or phone 303-456-9000.

BELL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to assist with the BELL programs. If you could spare one or more days to help with activities or drive on outings, it would be greatly appreciated (and fun for you!) A training session for the Colorado Springs program will be held on Monday, June 3. Volunteers for the Westminster program will meet on Tuesday, June 25th. Background check paperwork will be completed at the training sessions. Contact Michelle Chacon mchacon@adams50.org or phone 303-456-9000 for details on time and location. Thank you!



**Phamaly's
THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
Tours Colorado!**

Watch as the Velveteen Rabbit, the most modest toy in the nursery, earns the love of a young boy and learns about the joy and pain of becoming "real." This musical adaptation is a classic children's story that the entire family can enjoy.

Tour Dates:

Friday, April 12: Broomfield Auditorium, Broomfield, CO
7:00 p.m.

(Free: \$5.00 suggested donation at the door.)

Tuesday, May 14: PACE Center, Parker, CO.



CHERRY CREEK SNEAK
Sunday, April 28, 2013

The [Cherry Creek Sneak](#) is an annual running competition in Denver. Blind runners and their guides are welcomed. Every year more than 10,000 runners participate in the 10-mile, 5-mile, 3.1-mile (5k) and 1.5-mile sprint

courses. There's even a ½-mile Kids' Fun Run for kids ages 8 and under, and Diaper Dash for little ones in the Kids' Fun Zone. After the event, enjoy the post-race block party. Blind runners must register through Deb Conley. Guides run for free. USABA has donated money for blind runner's registration fees, and there is a possibility some or all of the blind runner's registration fee will be covered. To register or for more information contact Deb Conley deborahconley19@gmail.com



SPRING SCIENCE SEMINAR
Colorado Center for the Blind
April 12, 2013
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

The Colorado Center for the Blind is hosting a sensational Spring Science Seminar for middle and high-school students along with their families and teachers. This is an exciting opportunity for young people to experience a wide variety of ways to access the sciences.

Professors from Metro State University will teach us all about polymers. Roger Larson with Vernier Software & Technology will be demonstrating how to take

visual measurements non-visually.

Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind science teacher Jan Megerry will be working with the earth sciences .

Amelia Dickerson, a chemistry student from the University of Colorado in Boulder, will be conducting chemistry experiments and also sharing her experiences as a successful blind science student.

Students will have hands on experience with tools that make science accessible to them such as probes, smart pens, and an accessible periodic table.

Lunch will be provided. Contact Brent Batron at the Colorado Center for the Blind with any questions. Please RSVP by April 8, 2013.

Brent Batron
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**CALENDAR OF
UPCOMING EVENTS**



April events that have been described in this issue:

- April 12: Spring Science Seminar at CCB
- April 12: Velveteen Rabbit Musical by Phamaly
- April 28: Cherry Creek Sneak