



WINTER 2013 NEWSLETTER

Message from the President, Erica Ihrke

The 2013 annual conference is already starting to take shape. The Michigan Chapter of AER will be celebrating our 30th Annual conference. The planning committee has been very hard at work and has decided on the theme, "Cutting Edge". Please save the dates of April 25 & 26, 2013 at the Marriot Hotel at Laurel Park Place in Livonia. Watch our website (www.maerbvi.org) for registration, the conference agenda, award nominations and additional updates. Member e-mail blasts will alert you to these additions as well.

At a glance we have already secured two fabulous speakers to start off both days. Lou Tutt, AER Executive Director, and Robert Fried, author of "Igniting Your True Purpose and Passion". We have received many other wonderful submissions from the call for presentations that will round out yet another memorable conference.

A special thanks to Collette Bauman and MDE-LIO for collaborating with the MAER board on this year's conference and helping to secure Robert Fried and other speakers. The MAER board is looking forward to seeing you in April!

The 2012 international conference this past summer in Bellvue, WA was full of interesting and applicable sessions. Michigan's very own Dr. Richard Long was recognized and received the Lawrence E. Blaha Award during the Orientation and Mobility Division Awards Ceremony. The Lawrence E. Blaha Award honors individuals for contributions in the areas of direct service, contributions to the body of knowledge and mentorship. This is the highest award in the O&M Division. Congratulations Richard!

If you were not able to attend the 2012 international conference or are looking for more CE credits, more than 70 hours of programming are available to you for purchase sessions, so that you are able to get the latest updates and CE credit.

The 2014 AER International Conference will be held in San Antonio, TX from July 30 – August 3, 2014. Please visit <http://aerbvi.org> for more information about these conferences.

Erica Ihrke
President, Michigan AER

AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013

"Exploring All Options"

Sponsored by the AER Orientation & Mobility Division

Dec. 11-14, 2013

New Orleans, Louisiana

New Orleans Hilton Riverside

If you're an AER O&M Division member, you've been receiving information about this exciting conference to be held 10 years after the first O&M conference in New Orleans. This will be another fun and information

filled conference and I hope to see many COMS from Michigan there! Use the link below to get more information from AER website.

<http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>

Susan Langendonk, O&M Division Chair-Elect

Advocacy and Legislation

On November 2, 2012 the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopted Unified English Braille (UEB). The UEB is a new set of rules and contractions. There is a “carefully crafted timeline,” that will be used to implement the new rules. Textbooks and materials that have already been transcribed will still be used. Some changes to note: the following nine contractions will be eliminated: ally, ation, ble, by, com, dd, into, o'clock, & to. The literary dollar sign has been replaced by the Nemeth dollar sign. Some rules for when and when not to use contractions would be changed. Some contractions would be used more often than they are now. Nemeth Code and the Music Code will remain the same.

More detailed information about UEB can be found on the BANA website at www.brailleauthority.org.

Marcia Pavkovich

We Must Provide Equal Opportunity in Sports to Students with Disabilities

Playing sports at any level—club, intramural, or interscholastic—can be a key part of the school experience and have an immense and lasting impact on a student’s life. Among its many benefits, participation in extracurricular athletic activities promotes socialization, the development of leadership skills, focus, and, of course, physical fitness. It’s no secret that sports helped to shape my life. From a very early age, playing basketball taught me valuable lessons about grit, discipline, and teamwork that are still with me to this day.

Students with disabilities are no different – like their peers without disabilities, these students benefit from participating in sports. But unfortunately, we know that students with disabilities are all too often denied the chance to participate and with it, the respect that comes with inclusion. This is simply wrong. While it’s the coach’s job to pick the best team, students with disabilities must be judged based on their individual abilities, and not excluded because of generalizations, assumptions, prejudices, or stereotypes. Knowledgeable adults create the possibilities of participation among children and youth both with and without disabilities.

Today, ED’s Office for Civil Rights has released guidance that clarifies existing legal obligations of schools to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate alongside their peers in after-school athletics and clubs. We make clear that schools may not exclude students who have an intellectual, developmental, physical, or any other disability from trying out and playing on a team, if they are otherwise qualified. This guidance builds on a resource document the Department issued in 2011 that provides important information on improving opportunities for children and youth with disabilities to access PE and athletics.

Federal civil rights laws require schools to provide equal opportunities, not give anyone an unfair head start. So schools don’t have to change the essential rules of the game, and they don’t have to do anything that would provide a student with a disability an unfair competitive advantage. But they do need to make reasonable modifications (such as using a laser instead of a starter pistol to start a race so a deaf runner can compete) to ensure that students with disabilities get the very same opportunity to play as everyone else. The guidance issued today will help schools meet this obligation and will allow increasing numbers of kids with disabilities the chance to benefit from playing sports.

Arne Duncan is U.S. Secretary of Education

Calendar of events

February 2013

Sat, Feb. 23	10:00 AM	Household Chores and Repairs An Independent Living Skills Workshop For Students With Visual Impairments for parents and students	Livonia, MI
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March 2013

Fri, Mar 8	8:00 AM	Using Assessment Results to Create Strategies that Will Meet the Literacy Needs of Students	Livonia, MI
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April 2013

Wed, April 24	6:00 PM	MAER Board Meeting	Livonia, MI
Th, April 25 & Fri, April 26		Annual MAER Conference "Cutting Edge"	Livonia, MI

May 2013

Sun, May 5- Tues, May 7		WMU/MBAA Junior Sports Camp	Kalamazoo, MI
Wed, May 8- Sat, May 11		WMU/MBAA Senior Sports Camp	Kalamazoo, MI
Fri, May 10- Sat, May 11		WMU/MBAA Michigan State Games	Kalamazoo, MI

June 2013

Jun 21- Jun 28		Leader Dogs for the Blind Summer Experience (ages 16 & 17)application deadline April 1	Rochester Hills, MI
Mon, Jun 24 - Fri, Jun 28		Goalball	Detroit, MI

July 2013

Sat, July 6	10:00 AM-noon	Bear Lake Camp Open House	Lapeer, MI
Sun, July 14- Sat, July 20		Bear Lake Camp First Timers	Lapeer, MI
Sun, July 14- Sat, July 27		Bear Lake Camp Lifers	Lapeer, MI
Mon, Jul 15 - Fri, Jul 26		Elementary Enrichment Camp	Detroit, MI

August 2013

Mon, Aug 5 - Fri, Aug 16		Middle School (Youth) Enrichment Camp	Detroit, MI
Thu, Aug 22 - Wed, Aug 28		Sports and Technology Camp	Detroit, MI

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Tips and Tricks Corner

- Looking for tips for teaching Independent Living Skills? Look no further than the [MDE-LIO website](#). There are tips for cooking, eating, laundry and other skills under the “other resources” tab. Don’t forget to check out the ILS checklist. It’s a great way to jump start a fun day with students.
- The Pen Friend is a device that stores recorded messages triggered by an RFID label contained in a dime-sized sticker. (The device also contains an MP3 player which I’ve never used.) The stickers can be attached to a variety of items, a recording made which is stored in the Pen Friend device, and the identifying information is played back when the point of the pen is touched to the label. A set of labels is provided with the original purchase (S set), and additional packets of labels (sets A, B, C, and D) can be purchased. The Pen Friend is a product of RNIB. It includes recorded instructions in the package which can also be used for practice when training on the use of the Pen Friend.
When using the Pen Friend for labeling, apply the stickers to pieces of plastic cut from discarded containers with smooth plastic (e.g. cottage cheese carton, milk carton inside surface) with a hole punched in it. Attach a rubber band and attaché the “medallion” to the container to be labeled. This way, the label can be reused again after the item is empty and discarded.
Use the Pen Friend to label CDs and their jewel cases. Purchase two sets of the same packet of labels. Attach matching labels (check the number on the label) to the CD and to the jewel case. The recording will play the same for both labels, and the CD can be stored in the correct jewel case.

Resources

This website has many podcasts available on a wide range of topics from how to read vision reports, explanation of vision conditions, how to cut a steak, and find your way around a dinner plate without vision. <http://www.airsla.org/brailleprograms.asp>

Reminders

Teachers: <http://mde-lio.cenmi.org>

1. Go to Teacher Certification
2. Go to MI Education Certification Status

O&M and RT's: www.acvrep.org

1. Directory of Certificates

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 ssteffer@kresa.org

Our 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.*