



Message from the President,
Amy Lund

President's Message:

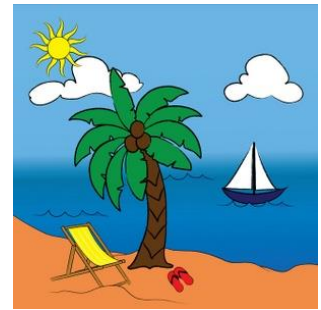
Hello IAER members!

I hope that each of you have been able to enjoy the change in weather and had some time to relax. It has given me some time to reflect on my first year as IAER President. I have truly enjoyed working with the incredible board members. Each brings a unique and helpful perspective to the organization. Perhaps you have thought about how you could get more involved in IAER? Contact any of the board members to see how you can add your contributions to our conference, committees or other avenues we haven't even thought of yet!

I would like to take a minute to thank three board members, specifically, for their service, as they are having to step down for various reasons. Andy Heim has served on the board for a term and a half and has provided enthusiasm and a unique perspective being a venter. He has coordinated our Space Camp committee and has been able to advertise and increase our applicants for Space Camp significantly. Betty Van Tassel has served on the board for one year and has organized our membership information as we try to remind lapsed members to update their information. Samantha Voll has been with the IAER board for one year and lead the awards committee in honoring our distinguished colleagues for their accomplishments. I, and the whole IAER board, thank you each for committing time and energy into our field and organization. THANK YOU!

I am looking forward to another amazing year for IAER as we have already begun to plan the 2016 Conference. Stay tuned for more information and the Call for Papers starting July 1.

Enjoy the summer weather!
Amy Lund, IAER President



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Committee Reports

Conference Report

Save the Date!

The Illinois AER Board of Directors invites you to mark your calendar for the 2016 Vision Conference. The tentative dates for the conference are February 18 and 19, 2016. A preconference day-long session on early intervention is being planned for February 17. The conference will once again be held at the Hyatt Regency at 1800 East Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173. The Call for Papers will go out on July 1, 2015. All proposals are due to Doug Anzlovar, conference program chair, no later than September 15, 2015. Please consider submitting a proposal to share your knowledge and expertise with colleagues!

Mini grants and Stipends

Mini-Grant Newsletter Article: By Pam Duda

CASE (Central Affiliation for Special Education) was awarded a \$500 mini-grant to host a Self-Defense and Physical Fitness activity day for students with vision loss and their parents. The activity was held at Leaders For Life Martial Arts studio. The day began with the ISU Braille Birds facilitating an ice breaker activity to help the students get to know each other. Chief of Police, Steven Bein is a father of two boys with RP. He was able to address how to keep safe in your home and community. Then 3 Black Belts instructed the students on blocks, breaking holds, punches, and kicks. Each student was able to break a board with a punch or a kick. They got to take the board home as a keepsake. The afternoon activities covered fitness. A Yoga instructor taught and executed a yoga routine. We were also blessed to have Ashley Eisenmenger, a 2014 high school graduate who is blind, join us. Ashley has immersed herself in marathons and triathlons. She was able to demonstrate how to participate in these events with the use of a guide. Her very first guide tool was a shoe string that a sighted running partner held one end while she held the other end. Ashley has improved her techniques of using guides to participate in triathlons while swimming, biking, and running. CASE wants to thank IAER for the mini-grant. This generous financial support allowed this activity to be a HIT! Several students wrote a testimonial about the recent activity.

I loved your activity day. I loved having Dad at the activity day. I give a special thanks to all the time and money that you put in to it.

Thank you,

Daniel age 8 (son of the Chief Bein)

It was fun because I would never do something like that on my own. It's also fun because I get hang out with friends that I don't always get to see and they are all so kind. Marta, 7th grade

I liked learning about how to defend yourself and how to break a board. ----

Andrew age 16

I thought that the activity day was cool because I learned a lot of things that I otherwise probably never would. I like activity days because I enjoy being with people with an impairment similar to mine.

Lonnie Age 16

The vision activity days allow me the opportunity to work on the ECC components that I often don't get to work on in the traditional classroom setting. They also allow my students the chance to meet other children their age with visual impairments and develop relationships beyond the classroom walls. These are an essential element to our successful programs in the CASE region.

Allyssa Harpst, USD 116 and M-S TVI

IAER Workshop Grants

CASE and American Printing House for the Blind Workshop at ISU

ISU and CASE hosted an APH outreach workshop at the SEAT Center. It was well attended with 31 participants. Participants included TVIs, O & M's, Professors and ISU students in the Low Vision and Blindness program. Maria Delgado flew in from Louisville, KY to provide instruction in AT, O & M and Recreation and Leisure products. Sue Sullivan joined the workshop via webcast. She walked us through the new APH CVI website. Attendees included TVIs, O&Ms, ISU faculty, and students.

Southern Illinois Conference for Parents of Children with Vision Loss

On Saturday, 14 March 2015, the one day Southern Illinois Conference for Parents with Vision Loss was held in Mt. Vernon, IL. This Conference is open to parents throughout the state of Illinois who have children with vision loss, but mostly parents from Southern Illinois attend. (There is a similar conference held in Rockford, IL for parents in the northern part of the state.) Thanks to the IAER Workshop Grant this conference was FREE to all participants!

This year we had 16 registered parents (including aunts, grandparents, etc.)—14 attended. We also had 5 students with visual impairments attend.

The objective of the conference is to get parents together for a fun and informative day. The program is developed from the parents' evaluations from the previous year. This year's program included Round Table Discussions with an emphasis on getting parents talking about topics of interest to them (advocacy, socialization, independent living and transition), school adaptations "Elementary: the Place for Super Learning" by Darla Chambers and "Helping Students and Young Children with Visual Impairments Explore, Learn & Communicate Using the iPad" by Julie Johnson.

Our final session was a teen panel, "Teens and Their Technology." The student panel has always been the most popular session of the Conference. This year three (3) teens talked about the technology they use in school--from low tech items such as dark lined paper to high tech electronic devices and software.. Parents asked many questions of the teens and the panel's response were clear, direct and sometimes funny!!! The teens did an excellent job of presenting their tech!!!

Evaluations from both the parents and the students indicated that they really enjoyed the conference. Some comments that when asked what they liked best included—

- networking with other parents & providers
- tons of resources and great connections
- relaxed atmosphere
- chance to share with other parents
- accessible, small size, helpful information
- panel/technology
- great information, great speakers

Thank you IAER for awarding us one of the IAER Workshop Grants and helping make this conference available to parents of Children with Visual Impairments at no charge!!!



Northern Illinois
University

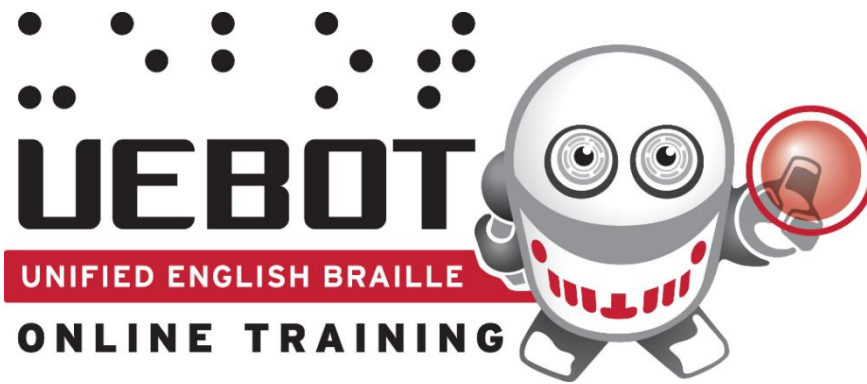
NIU Update

Upcoming Graduates: We have 15 students who have recently graduated or will be graduating this summer. Specifically, we had 5 dual RT and O&M graduates, 6 dual TVI and O&M graduates, and 2 TVI graduates this May 2015. In addition, we will have 2 O&M graduates this August 2015. Please forward information about job openings to Gaylen Kapperman (gkapperman@niu.edu) or Stacy Kelly (skelly@niu.edu) so we can share this information with upcoming graduates!

Braille Training Grant: The Unified English Braille Online Training (UEBOT) is a free online training program that addresses the immediate need for UEB training. UEBOT is now open for enrollment and is scheduled to run continuously every month for the next 4 years. UEBOT is available for 10 CEU's of ACVREP continuing education credit at no charge and university graduate level credit for additional cost. The flyer on the following page provides additional information about this program too. For more information and to create a UEBOT account today, go to <http://www.uebot.niu.edu>. Also, like and follow us on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/UEBOT1.

Summer Only O&M Program: The summer O&M training program is starting this summer 2015 and will continue for a total of 4 summers. All available funded spots for this summer training program have been filled. We look forward to welcoming our newest students to campus to this summer.

Regular School Year Training Programs Funding Available: Also, we report that all funded positions for our TVI and O&M training program have been filled for the 2015-2016 academic year. We are currently looking for students for our generous financial aid to start in the fall 2016. For more information about this funding, please contact Gaylen Kapperman at gkapperman@niu.edu or 815-753-8453.



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Illinois State University Update

ISU Braille Birds Dinner in the Dark

Braille Birds held their 2nd annual Dinner in the Dark event on March 26, 2015 at the ISU Alumni Center. ISU's own Dr. Bruce Franson and his wife Debbie were guest speakers. Participants learned how to orient themselves to their dinner plates by watching videos from Perkins elearning website. They also had a clock placemat and the caterers worked closely with us to be sure that the food was placed on the plates following the clock pattern (protein at 6 o'clock, veggie at 3 o'clock, and starch at 9 o'clock). After the dinner and guest speaker, participants experienced audio description and were given information about the U.S. Department of Education audio description program. Money raised from this event will help the Braille Birds implement various community service activities for children who are blind/visually impaired.



Figure 1. Participants at the Dinner in the Dark. Two women sit at a table. Both of the women have black eye masks on and are eating dinner from a round white plate.



Figure 2. Group picture of the Braille Birds and the two guest speakers.

Children's Discovery Museum Low-Sensory Night in Uptown Normal

On Friday, April 17, 2015 the ISU Braille Birds and the Low Vision and Blindness program were invited to participate in the Children's Discovery Museum's first ever Low-Sensory Family Night. The event was designed for families with children who have autism and other sensory needs. ISU had two tables set up with tactile activities that were completed using blindfolds, tactile dominoes, brailled children books: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and real object activity story books. Participants also had the opportunity to play a game on the braille light board and use a Perkins Braille to braille their name. Participants also walked away with braille alphabet cards and information about our LVB program and Braille Birds organization.



Figure 3. Photo of the LVB and Braille Birds Activity Table at the Children's Discovery Museum in Uptown Normal