

# Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired

## Visual Field Newsletter August 2010

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### Welcome and Welcome Back:

It is time to "kick-off" the new school year. We welcome any new teachers or vision contacts to our "vision" group. And...welcome back to all the returning teachers and vision contacts. We are glad you are here.

Many of you know that I was out on medical leave February through June. Well, I am happy to report that I'm back to work and getting stronger every day. My rare blood disease is under control and the doctors are happy with my progress. I have been totally overwhelmed with the outpouring of caring that I have received from the most awesome teachers in the world.....you guys ROCK! I can't thank you enough for your cards, prayers, emails, and good thoughts throughout my ordeal. It will be so much fun to see everyone this school year!

### FAER Conference News:

By now you should have received in your inbox, your "Invitation to Register" for the Weekends with the Experts and the Florida Association for the Education and Rehabilitation Conference. If you have not received that email, please go to <http://guest.cvent.com/d/pdqfdz> for more information. To REGISTER for FAER, or Weekends, or BOTH conferences click here: <http://guest.cvent.com/d/pdqfdz>. The FAER conference will be **November 18 and 19, 2010**, at the **Doubletree Hotel in Tampa**. The **Health and Career FAER** will be filled with sessions focusing on CAREER BUILDING SKILLS and WELLNESS, FITNESS, AND HEALTH issues specific to children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. Hands-on sessions with sports and fitness experts as well as sessions on technology, career options, transition programs, and vital skills for successful careers will be offered. Immediately following the **Health and Career FAER** will be FIMC-VI's Weekends

with the Experts hands-on training on the APH Braille+ and Book Port Plus. For more information about Weekends...keep reading!

## **Weekends with the Experts:** The dates and topics for the **2010 – 2011 Weekends with the Experts:**

November 19 and 20, 2010 – Hands-on training for the APH Braille+ and Book Port Plus, assistive technology devices. These devices are available with Federal Quota Funds for students registered with FIMC-VI. The Braille+ Mobile Manager is a powerful and easy-to-use notetaker/PDA designed for users who are blind or visually impaired. The Book Port Plus is a digital reading device that is the next generation of audio reading devices. In fact...for the **2011 Braille Challenge, the Book Port Plus is replacing the cassette player for students in grades 5 – 12.** So teachers, if you have students participating in the Braille Challenge, it is important that you attend this training so you can prepare them for using the Book Port Plus.

FAER Conference AND Weekends with the Experts workshops will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Westshore, Tampa, Florida. (For more information: <http://guest.cvent.com/d/pdqfdz>)

**Tentative March 11 and 12, 2011** – Tools for Appropriately Assessing the Skills of Students Who Use Braille as a Primary Reading Medium. Teachers of the visually impaired will be provided training on the use of the Woodcock Johnson III Braille Edition (available from APH), while school psychologists will be trained by Dr. Joan Chase on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC). Dr. Chase has adapted the WISC to tactile testing items. Each Florida public school district that completes the WISC training will receive one free adapted WISC testing kit (worth \$500.00). The workshops will be held at the Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park. Watch your email for more information and registration.

## **Update Your Personnel Records...please!**

It is the beginning of a new school year and once again FIMC-VI needs to update our records with the new TVIs, Vision Contacts, and ESE Directors. If you had any personnel changes in your district, please send Kathee Cagle ([Kcagle@fimcvi.org](mailto:Kcagle@fimcvi.org)) an email detailing the changes. Remember, before new TVIs can order materials or access student records, we must receive an "authorization" email from an administrator with the TVIs name and contact information (email, phone, and mailing address). Thanks for your help in this matter.

**APH News:** <http://www.aph.org/advisory/2010adv08.html>

## **Field Evaluators Needed!**

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APH is seeking field evaluators for **Accessible Multiple-Choice Answer Documents**, our newly redesigned braille and large print answer sheets. Feedback from 120 vision professionals who participated in the "Answer Document Survey" in 2007 guided our product design. Four different styles of braille/tactile answer sheets and three styles of large print sheets will be tested with students in grades 2 through high school. The goal is to determine which style(s) students find easier to use independently, and which are more engaging.

These answer documents will be evaluated for student use on regular classroom/curricular tests, statewide standards-based tests, and on standardized tests such as the Stanford Achievement Tests. Sample multiple-choice questions will be provided for the field test. After administering the questions, which will take about an hour, teachers will fill out a questionnaire.

The target date to ship field test materials is November 1, 2010. Each site will have the remainder of the semester (or until the Holiday break) to complete the testing and evaluation. If you would like to assist us as a field evaluator for the answer documents, please contact **Barbara Henderson**, APH Test & Assessment Project Leader, offline at (800) 223-1839 or [bhenderson@aph.org](mailto:bhenderson@aph.org)

## Tactile Graphics Update:

Lucia Hasty, from the February 2010 Weekends with the Experts, has provided us with the link to the information on Labels and Keys for Tactile Graphics: <http://tactilegraphics.org/Keys-TG.pdf>.

On this website you will find topics such as:

- How is a tactile graphic labeled?
- When is a key needed?
- How are the symbols shown?
  - Texture Symbols
  - Lettered Symbols
- Format for the key page
- Examples

This is a great reference sheet for anyone making or teaching tactile graphics.

# Dawn Saunders Memorial

As many of you know Dawn Saunders, our Vision and Deaf-Blind Program Specialist at the Florida Department of Education, lost her courageous battle with breast cancer. On June 3, 2010, Dawn passed quietly. Her leadership and "can do" spirit will be greatly missed by everyone in our field. She was a fierce advocate for children who are deaf-blind, blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard-of-hearing. To honor Dawn's contributions to Florida's field of education, the Bureau has decided to donate an engraved stone for permanent display on the Wall of Tribute at the American Printing House Hall of Fame.

For those of you that want to contribute to this effort, please see this letter below from Bambi Lockman, Chief of the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services:

*Dear Colleagues and Friends,*

*Last month, staff members within the Bureau decided to acquire an inscribed stone in memory of our beloved colleague, Dawn M. Saunders. This stone will be placed on the Wall of Tribute to "Friends of Leaders and Legends" in the Hall of Fame located at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). The Wall of Tribute has been designed to provide an opportunity to honor those who have made a difference through their contributions to the field.*

*Many of you indicated an interest in contributing to this tribute stone. An account has been established at APH. Individuals may write a check payable to the APH Hall of Fame and indicate in the memo portion of the check that the contribution is being made in memory of Dawn Saunders. APH is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and you will receive an acknowledgement of your contribution. In order for us to finalize plans with APH, we would appreciate receiving all donations no later than October 29, 2010.*

*Please mail your contributions to:*

*American Printing House for the Blind  
Attn. Alice Garrett  
P.O. Box 6085  
Louisville, KY 40206-0085*

*On behalf of the Bureau, I want to thank you for the many kind messages we received expressing your sadness and acknowledging Dawn's wonderful service. Our sincere thanks for your love, support and concern.*

***Bambi J. Lockman**, Chief*

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Phone: 850-245-0475

Fax: 850-245-0953

# DeWitt Curriculum Materials for Teaching JAWS and Zoom-Text Skills

The **DeWitt and Associates TrainingWare®**, curricular materials for teaching students to use JAWS or Zoom-Text have been updated and revised. The titles we have in the recommended order of progression are:

1. Teaching Windows Concepts
2. Teaching Word 2003 OR Teaching Windows 2007
3. Teaching the Internet
4. Teaching Outlook Express
5. Teaching Excel

The easy-to-follow lesson plans allow the teacher of the visually impaired to work with the student as they complete each lesson in the manual. Not only does the student (and teacher) learn to use JAWS or Zoom-Text, but they learn the software applications and the internet. With JAWS or Zoom-Text already installed on the computer, you simply start with the student assessment tools and work through the sequential lesson plans. The Teacher Manuals are in print and the Student Lessons are on a CD.

To comply with our license agreement with DeWitt, we must maintain records of which students are using which titles. You will only be allowed one title per student at a time. Once you complete one curriculum title, you may request the next title. If your student has extenuating circumstances, please call us to discuss other options.

Please email Donna Ross ([dross@fimcvi.org](mailto:dross@fimcvi.org)) to request the order / tracking form.

## Expansion of the FSU Visual Disabilities Program in Central Florida????

Dear Colleagues, Mentors, Rehabilitation Counselors, Education Professionals and Friends,

I am excited to share with you that The Florida State University's program in Visual Disabilities is presently investigating the possibility of initiating a Central Florida Satellite program in Visual Disabilities! The program would offer bachelor and master level degrees in Visual Disabilities, preparing individuals to become one or more of the following: teacher of the visually impaired (TVI), orientation and mobility specialist (OM) and/or vision rehabilitation therapist (VRT).

The Central Florida Satellite program would be based in Orlando. The program would begin in Spring 2011. At least 50% the cost of tuition would be paid for via a grant project. The grant requires 'years of service in the field of visual disabilities' in lieu of monetary payback.

I am currently scouring the Central Florida (and extended) community to determine how many individuals might be interested in the program. Below is a link to the 24 question (yes/no responses) questionnaire that I placed on Survey Monkey to collect information from potential or interested students.

Please forward the link to individuals who might be interested in the field of visual disabilities.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9V692QF>

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

For additional information on Florida State University's Program in Visual Disabilities:  
[www.careersinblindness.com](http://www.careersinblindness.com)

Kimberly Pawling, Ph.D., COMS & CVRT  
Director of Educational Programs & Research  
Lighthouse Central Florida  
215 E. New Hampshire Street  
Orlando, FL 32804  
[kpawling@lcf-fl.org](mailto:kpawling@lcf-fl.org)  
Ph: 407-898-2483

[Http://www.lighthousecentralflorida.org](http://www.lighthousecentralflorida.org)

## **Dr. Sandra Lewis is awarded the Mary Kay Bauman Award at AER International**

Florida's very own Dr. Sandy Lewis, from Florida State University was awarded the Mary Kay Bauman Award at AER International this summer. According to the AER website, *"The Mary K. Bauman Award was established to honor an individual who has made significant and outstanding contributions to the education of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired. These leadership contributions have had an impact on a national or international level through their direct effect on visually impaired children or through the example, insight and inspiration that they provided to educators of visually impaired children in other states or nations."*

That is a very fitting description of Dr. Lewis. Through her leadership the Visual Disabilities Program at FSU has expanded beyond the campus at Tallahassee. It now has three satellite programs and they are investigating a fourth. All programs offer a combination of hands-on and online classes to prepare TVIs, O&M Specialists, and Rehab Therapists. It is through Dr. Lewis' efforts and perseverance that Florida has such a strong, vibrant, and growing teacher prep program. Congratulations, Sandy!

Thanks for all you do for kids! Make it a great year!!!

Suzanne Dalton, Kay Ratzlaff, and Donna Ross