***COLORADO CENTER FOR THE BLIND***

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***December 2012 Newsletter***

***Take charge with confidence and self-reliance***

**Message from the Director**

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Thank you!  I want to take a moment to let all of you know how much your support and love means to us at the Colorado Center for the Blind!  Without you we would not have the ability to provide the programs that we have.  Your assistance and work with us means more to me and the Center staff and students than you can imagine! On December 4th, GivingFirst Day, we raised over $14,000.  Whether you assist us monetarily, volunteer, or refer blind individuals to us, you are valuable and part of our Colorado Center family.

**Program Notes**

***Independence Training Program***

Jessica, age 24, has never had the opportunity to handle a home, travel independently and take care of her finances.  She arrived at the Center at the end of October with a mix of apprehension and anticipation.  She attended the state convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and loved the energy.  Jessica was nervous about working around a hot oven and the stove.  Last week, she made pasta by herself and it was the most delicious pasta she has ever had because she made it herself.  On Monday I heard true fear in her voice as she left the Center on her first independent travel route.  She really did not believe that she could do this.  When she arrived back, her confidence was brimming.  Tomorrow, Jessica will travel through the airport on her own as she goes home to celebrate Christmas with her family.

Role Reversal Day

On Thursday of last week, the students became the teachers and the staff became the students.  Our students put together the schedule, lesson plans and took control.  Of course, everyone wore sleepshades.  At the end of the day we gathered together to talk about our experiences.  Norma, one of our students, expressed her appreciation and fears around teaching home management.  She truly has transformed in her time with us.  When she started her program here she was scared of the stove and now she loves home management.  We all agreed that the day was a great success and that we learned so much from each other.

***Youth Services***

On Friday, November 30th we were pleased to host a Career Connections seminar. Several high school and middle school students attended along with parents, their teachers and para-professionals.  Our adult students mentored the teens.  Breakout sessions included Working with iPhones, iPods and Other Devices; Professional Presentation; and Discussions on Blindness.  We were inspired to hear from two blind professionals, a teacher of blind students, and a budget analyst with the state of Colorado.  Following their presentations everyone participated in a job fair.  We had several employers present along with colleges.  Everyone gained a great deal from the seminar.  Mostly, they learned that being blind does not need to be a barrier to attend college, obtain a job and establish a career.  The energy level was palpable!

***Senior Program***

Over 50 seniors celebrated the holidays last week, with a big party held here at the Center.  Everyone enjoyed talking with each other. Nothing is better than being around a group of fun blind people to realize that being blind is not a tragedy in any way.

In January, the group will go to the Vincent van Gogh exhibit.  Since the women in the Tuesday group cooked for the men in November, it will be the men’s turn in January.

**Senior groups are available weekly.  For more information, please call Duncan Larsen at** [**303-778-1130 extension 226**](tel:303-778-1130%20extension%20226)**.**

**Upcoming Events:**

Upcoming youth events:

January 22-February 26:  Goalball for 6 weeks

We will conduct a 6 week goalball clinic in conjunction with USABA.  This clinic will be held every Tuesday from 4:30 – 6:30 pm beginning on January 22nd.  We will learn the rules of the game, practice drills and play games. There is no charge for this activity but please plan on participating in all 6 dates.

February 15:  Chemistry Seminar

We will work with professors from a local university to show blind kids, their parents and their teachers that chemistry is an exciting science.  For far too long, blind kids have been told that they cannot participate in a productive manner in this discipline.  We want to show blind students that they easily can participate in science classes.  By introducing these kids to safe and effective non-visual techniques, a career in chemistry may be their dream.

February 22-24:  Family Seminar

We invite four families with blind children to spend the weekend with us learning skills of blindness and to participate in a dialogue to better understand blindness as well as to network with other families who have children who are blind.  Both parents and kids will work on cane travel, Braille, cooking skills and gain a better understanding that blindness is not a barrier to success but instead simply a characteristic.

**To refer someone who is interested in training, please call Robert Dyson at** [**303-778-1130 extension 249**](tel:303-778-1130%20extension%20249)**.**

**If you have items for the newsletter, please send them to** [**ccb@cocenter.org**](mailto:ccb@cocenter.org)**.**