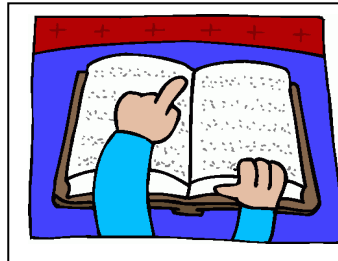


E-CONNECTOR

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

Inside this issue:

- **CHANGES IN BRAILLE ARE ON THE WAY**
- **WASHINGTON SEMINAR...WHAT IS IT? SHOULD PARENTS GO?**
- **THE TEACH ACT**
- **COLORADO GIVES DAY FOR CCB**
- **CCB OPEN HOUSE FOR YOUTH**
- **BLINDNESS RESOURCES ON-LINE**
- **HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS**
- **DECEMBER CALENDAR**



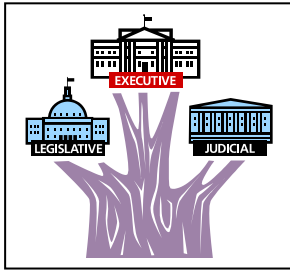
CHANGES IN BRAILLE ARE ON THE WAY

After years of discussion, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) has voted to adopt the Unified English Braille code (UEB) which will bring the U.S. in line with the other countries in the world that use English Braille. Although the dot formations of letters and numbers will stay the same, the Unified English Braille code will address some of the problems that existed with the old code. Nine contractions (*ally, ation, ble, by, com, dd, into, o'clock, and to*) will be eliminated. Words that are currently written together, such as "and the" will be spaced apart as in print. In the old code there isn't a way to differentiate between bold, underlined and italicized text. The new code will change that. These are just a few examples

of the changes to come. There are many more, but never fear... words and numbers will remain readable to anyone.

Although the official date for change is January 4, 2016 (Louis Braille's 207th birthday), the transition will begin before then. Starting now, educators will begin planning how they will introduce the changes and make the transition to the new Braille in the classroom. It won't happen overnight, but soon brand new Braille readers will learn the new rules and never know what "used to be". Obviously there are thousands of books and documents in "old Braille", but the changes are not so dramatic as to render any of those materials unreadable to a Braille reader who has only learned the new system. Although the changes may be slightly annoying to older Braille readers who loved Braille just the way it was, everyone will adjust and hopefully grow to appreciate that there are fewer ambiguities in the new Braille code.

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.newsletter@gmail.com,
attention Julie Hunter, editor.

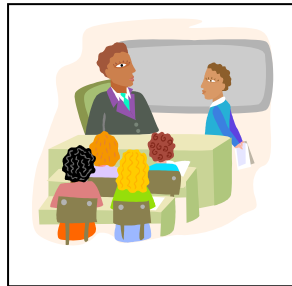


WASHINGTON SEMINAR...WHAT IS IT? SHOULD PARENTS GO?

The National Federation of the Blind Washington Seminar is one of the most important annual activities of the organization. It is the designated "gathering in" of NFB members from across the country for the purpose of meeting with our congressional representatives and their staff members in their Washington offices to discuss issues of great importance to the blind of America. Three or four key problem areas and/or pieces of pending legislation are highlighted in position papers that have been prepared by the NFB legislative experts. NFB members, from every state and from every walk of life, make the trip to Washington DC to carry that legislative agenda to the Hill and tell, from the heart and from the homeland, why the issues are important to the blind of the nation. Congressional offices are accustomed to visits from legislative advocates from every imaginable organization and cause, but what they are not accustomed to is a concentrated and organized onslaught of five hundred blind

people walking the halls of Congress with tapping white canes and guide dogs. Needless to say, we get some attention! It is an exhilarating experience to feel that you are helping make history.

The 2014 Washington Seminar will take place from Monday January 27 through Thursday January 30, 2014. For more information go to <https://nfb.org/washington-seminar> or send questions to copobc@gmail.com.



THE TEACH ACT

Speaking of Washington Seminar, there is little doubt that the TEACH Act will be one of the issues being discussed with Congress. Last month Congressman Tom Petri introduced the Technology, Education and Accessibility in College and Higher Education Act (HR 3505). The TEACH Act will provide guidelines for manufacturers of educational technology and clarity for institutions of higher education to ensure that materials are usable by all students.

The law currently prohibits the use of inaccessible technology

in the classroom because it is a form of discrimination that leaves blind students behind, and yet the overwhelming majority of digital instructional material is unusable by blind students. The guidelines created by the TEACH Act will give direction for manufacturers of educational technology to increase commercial availability of accessible materials, and guide institutions of higher education in how to meet their legal obligations in regard to students with disabilities.

The creation of the TEACH Act was the result of a collaboration between the National Federation of the Blind and the Association of American Publishers. There is a long road ahead before the TEACH Act can come to a vote, but the NFB will see that it gets there and that it is adopted.



COLORADO GIVES DAY... FOR THE CCB!

Donate on Colorado Gives Day, December 10, to support the Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs. As most of you know, the Colorado Center for the Blind provides

independence skills training programs for blind and visually impaired individuals, both adults and children. One hundred per cent of the funds raised will go directly to CCB programs. In addition, FirstBank will once again offer incentive funds based on the total amount raised by each non-profit, so that your donation will go even further.

It is easy to donate by visiting <https://www.coloradogives.org/CoCenter/overview> on December 10th. If you don't want to have to remember that date, go to Colorado Gives and schedule your donation for Tuesday, the 10th. If you have been touched by the Center in any way, this is a great opportunity to give back. You can make a donation and/or help us pass this campaign information forward to help raise money for the non-profit that is changing what it means to be blind.



COLORADO CENTER FOR THE BLIND

OPEN HOUSE FOR YOUTH

Friday, December 13
2:00-5:00 p.m.

Students of all ages, parents and teachers are invited to visit the Center on December 13.

Take a look around...join in the fun activities, including making mini pizzas, some cool science experiments and tactile art activities. This interactive after school event is everyone's opportunity to learn more about the Colorado Center for the Blind and its fabulous programs for children and youth.

The Colorado Center for the Blind is located just south of old downtown Littleton at 2233 West Shepperd Avenue.



BLINDNESS RESOURCES ON-LINE

Many of us spend time roaming through cyber space in search of good, reliable information about blindness and raising blind children. Here are a few great sites for both gathering information and asking questions. (If there are other sites that have been particularly helpful to you, we'd love to share them. Send suggestions to copobc.newsletter@gmail.com)

blindkid@nfbnet.org This is an interactive site sponsored by the NFB and supported by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (our parent organization). If you

have a question or need an opinion on raising a blind child, this is the place to go.

<http://www.pdrib.com/blog/>

This new blog on blindness from the Louisiana Tech Institute on Blindness is a bit more adult oriented. Latest blog: tips on serving yourself at a buffet when you are blind.

blindhow.com

BlindHow is an information sharing site. Find answers and share knowledge on any topic regarding blindness & visual impairment.

<http://www.blindscience.org/>

Serves as a national clearinghouse for resources and expertise related to non-visual scientific exploration.



HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

December brings with it all the joys of the holidays. The decorations, the scent of evergreens and gingerbread men, and the anticipation of a possible visit from Santa Claus (and a vacation from school!) bring excitement to children of all ages. Here are some ideas of things to do with your blind/visually impaired children this holiday season:



Braille Letters from Santa:

The National Federation of the Blind has once again assisting Santa Claus in sending Braille letters to blind children.

Between now and December 19, parents can go online at and fill out a Santa Braille Letter request form <<https://nfb.org/santa-letters>>. The form can also be printed and faxed to (410) 685-2340. Your child will receive a Braille letter with a print copy for mom and dad to read. Requests for letters must include the writer's name, the child's name, birthday, gender, mailing address, a telephone number, and e-mail address in case Santa's helpers at the National Federation of the Blind have questions.



HOLIDAY PARTY, December 7th:

Parents of Blind Children and the NFB of Denver invite you to bring the kids and celebrate the season. There will be sandwiches, snacks and desserts, craft activities for the kids, cookie decorating and a visit from Santa Claus! We look forward to seeing everyone there. (An optional adult gift

exchange will also take place. If you wish to participate, bring a gift valued at \$15 or less.) Contributions of desserts or appetizers to share are also welcomed. The party will take place from 1:00-4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 7 at the Colorado Center for the Blind: 2233 West Shepperd Ave., Littleton CO.



Celebrate Christmas at the Theater, December 15:

The Denver Center Theatre Company and Phamaly Theatre both are presenting Christmas plays that might be fun for older children and teens. Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Stage Theatre, will be audio described on December 15th at 1:30 p.m. [Click here](#) for ticket information.

Phamaly will offer an audio described performance of *It's a Wonderful Life* on December 15 at 2:00 p.m. at the Aurora Fox Arts Center. There will be a pre-show sensory tour for a hands-on back stage experience. (For sensory tour reservations contact jnoble@phamaly.org.) For ticket information [click here](#).



Books for Gifts and Just for Fun:

BRL (the Beulah Reimer Legacy) is a great resource for books for young Braille readers (or future Braille readers). The print in standard picture story books is overlaid with Braille on clear plastic strips. (They will also Braille specific books by request.) Most books cost \$6.00 each. For the holidays, BRL is offering a Holiday Reading Grab Bag. Four books will be selected for your child based on information you provide about your child's reading level and interests for a price of \$20. Visit the website, www.beulahreimerlegacy.com, to view the book selection.



DECEMBER CALENDAR

(Read details in above articles)

- December 7:** CO-POBC HOLIDAY PARTY
- December 10:** COLORADO GIVES DAY - Support CCB!
- December 13:** OPEN HOUSE AT CCB FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES
- December 15:** AUDIO DESCRIPTION DAY FOR "A Christmas Carol" and "It's a Wonderful Life"