

E-CONNECTOR

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

Inside this issue:

- NFB: FIGHTING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE RIGHTS OF BLIND STUDENTS
- LOW COST COMPUTERS
- BLIND ADVENTURER'S NEWEST CHALLENGE
- STAY AT HOME WORKSHOPS
- LEARN TO PLAY GOALBALL
- SO, WHAT IS GOALBALL?
- CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS



NFB: FIGHTING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE RIGHTS OF BLIND STUDENTS

Over the last twenty years the world has been swept up in an avalanche of advances in computer technology. For blind students the advent of the computer has helped to level the playing field in regard to information access and written communication. Screen Readers, notetakers, printers and scanners...the list goes on and on.... have made it possible for blind students to be more independent in completing their school work. However, the speed of change has its drawbacks. Very often new technologies are introduced without any concern for usability by a blind person. **But, never fear...the NFB is here!** The NFB is the blind consumer watchdog, unafraid to take on the

manufacturers and distributors of appliances, devices or websites that are inaccessible. They insist on compliance with the ADA and federal guidelines and are not afraid to pursue justice in a court of law.

The latest battle on the technology front has to do with the efforts by Amazon.com to move its inaccessible Kindle e-readers into K-12 schools across the country. Adding to the problem, Amazon has developed a system called Whispercast that allows teachers to distribute Kindle content to computer devices other than Kindles. Neither the Kindle devices nor the book files available through Whispercast are accessible to students who are blind or have other print disabilities. Since school districts are required under federal law to purchase only accessible technology and content, Amazon must make Kindle e-books accessible if it plans to go forward with moving them into the classroom.

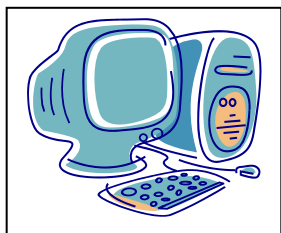
In an effort to educate the public schools and Amazon.com about the problems inherent in employing the Kindle e-readers

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@gmail.com, attention Julie Hunter, editor

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and Whispercast content into the schools, the NFB held an informational protest at the headquarters of Amazon.com in Seattle, Washington on December 12, 2012. The NFB is attempting to work amicably with Amazon.com to help them understand the problems blind users face in trying to use their products. But, if efforts to solve the accessibility issues are not forthcoming, there could be legal action to prevent schools from purchasing inaccessible e-readers from Amazon.com.

There is no question that providing textbooks in electronic format is the wave of the future and will provide wonderful advantages to all students. However, until those e-readers are fully accessible to the blind user, including those wanting to read content with a Braille display, the NFB will not rest.



LOW COST COMPUTERS

For a donation of only \$100, you can get a refurbished computer complete with monitor and adaptive software from Computers for the Blind, a project of the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged. Each computer comes complete with

monitor, keyboard, mouse, speakers, and all associated cables. It also comes with preloaded software. Software includes: Open Office for word processing, NVDA screen reader, a demo version of Window-Eyes, and a 60-day demo version of ZoomText. Call Lee Mann at (214) 340-6328 for information.

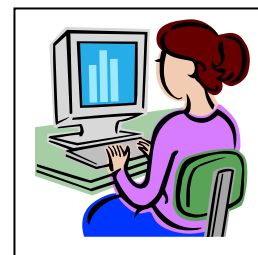


BLIND ADVENTURER'S NEWEST CHALLENGE

Eirik Weihenmayer, the first blind climber to summit Mount Everest, is taking on a new challenge...paddling a single-person kayak through the Grand Canyon on one of the most challenging stretches of the Colorado River. Weihenmayer has been training at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in North Carolina with two Olympic kayak team members. In much the same way as a blind skier listens to a guide who follows behind and tells the skier when to turn, Erik will be receiving critical information from his friend, Robert Raker, who will be in a following kayak. Raker paddles behind Erik and calls out the direction he wants him to turn and how far. Small right

or left means a 90 degree turn and hard right or left means turn a full 180 degrees. Charge means to paddle furiously ahead. Erik said, "I think blind kayaking is a different sport than a sighted person kayaking because you [the sighted kayaker] rely on your eyes so much. I'm trying to feel what's under my boat and what's under my paddle, and to use my ears, and everything is happening so quickly." The challenges are tremendous considering the extreme variables in navigating a small boat over a moving mountain of white water. (Taken from [New York Times](#), November 12, 2012 [A Blind Adventurer's Next Challenge](#))

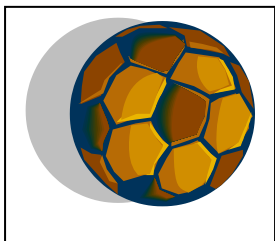
We wish Erik the best of luck in this adventure as he breaks new ground for blind people everywhere.



STAY AT HOME WORKSHOPS

PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) offers on-line workshops for parents who would like to know more about the IEP and the special education process. Most webinars are less than 15 minutes long. Sample topics include: "IDEA: Understanding

Measurable Goals in the IEP,” “Six Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy”, and “Special Education Communication: Three Quick Skills.” Learn more by [clicking here](#) or go to www.pacer.org.



LEARN TO PLAY GOALBALL: January 22-February 26, 2013

The Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Services Program and the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) are joining forces to offer a 6 week goalball clinic for blind youth. This clinic will be held every Tuesday from 4:30-6:30 pm beginning on January 22nd. It will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind, 2233 W. Shepperd Ave., Littleton, Colorado. Students will learn the rules of the game, practice drills and play games. Please plan on participating in all 6 dates. There is no charge for this activity. Contact Brent Batron, CCB Youth Services Coordinator, to sign up or for more information. 303-778-1130, ext. 222 or bbatron@cocenter.org.

SO, WHAT IS GOALBALL?

Goalball is a highly competitive sport played three-against-three, indoors on a gym floor. There are two teams playing against each other, with one on each end of the 60x40 foot court. All players are blindfolded due to varying levels of sight among players. The players use cord or thin rope taped to the floor, or other similar tactile markings, to maintain their orientation on the court. The object is to roll a three-pound Goalball, which is sort of like a heavy basketball, past the opposing team without them stopping it. The ball contains bells that jingle as it rolls. When the players hear the ball coming toward their end of the court, they dive, usually head-first, in the direction of the ball hoping to block it with their body and stop it. They often slide back and forth on the floor, using their bodies to block the oncoming ball. If all three players miss the ball and it goes past them or over them and then over the back line, it is considered a goal. The team with the most goals at the end of two 10-minute halves, wins the game.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS



January 19: Skiing Opportunity

CILA (University of Colorado student Council for Inclusion, Leadership and Advocacy) and IGNITE Adaptive Sports at Eldora Ski School are sponsoring a free day of skiing including a barbecue lunch and transportation from Boulder. For more information Email bigbuff.littlebuff@gmail.com. January 5th is the deadline for registration.

January 19: Meet us at the NFB!

10:00 am-12:00 pm
National Federation of the Blind of Denver monthly chapter meeting. Parents are encouraged to come learn more about the NFB and how we work together to promote better lives for all blind /visually impaired people. Meet at the CCB: 2233 W. Shepperd Ave. Littleton, CO 80120

January 22: Goalball

Colorado Center for the Blind Goalball clinics begin. See preceding article for information.