

E-CONNECTOR

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

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EVERY DAY IS INDEPENDENCE DAY!

On July 4th we will celebrate America's independence. It's a wonderful holiday filled with summer fun, picnics and fireworks. Thinking about what independence means for us as citizens of this country brings to mind the notion of what independence means for us as individuals. The freedoms that we enjoy give us the opportunity to pursue the "American dream".

Independence has an additional meaning to those with disabilities. Disabled individuals are often measured by their level of independence, that is their ability to function without any more assistance than would be deemed "normal". Parents of blind and visually impaired children and their teachers work hard to give children solid skills in alternative techniques so that

they can become "Independent Blind Adults". There are times, however, when all parents struggle with questions about whether they, the parents, should help their child with a particular task or push the child to "be independent" and get the task done on his own. For example, when is it okay to have your child hold on to your arm or hand and guide them, and when should you prompt them to use their cane and find their own way? Of course we want to encourage our children to practice using their canes, but we all know there are circumstances when it is more practical to use the sighted guide technique. Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, president of the National Federation of the Blind for nearly twenty years, wrote about this subject in a speech he gave at the 1993 National Convention titled "The Nature of Independence". (You may read the speech on the NFB website, www.nfb.org by clicking here: <https://nfb.org/Images/nfb/Publications/convent/address93.htm>). In this speech Dr. Jernigan answers questions posed to him by students regarding his own use of sighted guides at



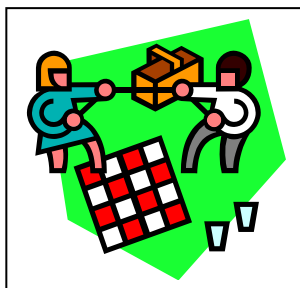
Editor's Note: Please feel free to contact us if you have an announcement you would like included in the newsletter or if you would like to add a friend or family member to the e-mail list. Direct all communications to: copobc@gmail.com, attention Julie Hunter, editor.

conventions. Dr. Jernigan weighs the balance of using alternative techniques of the blind against the choice of using a sighted assistant. Dr. Jernigan makes the point that it's not only a matter of mastering the alternative skills of blindness, but also coming to a full belief in oneself as an equal to sighted peers that brings true independence. Self confidence and self respect combined with good skills will give one the freedom to choose assistance without any notion of losing independence.

Here is a quote from his speech: "Hold your head high in the joy of accomplishment and the pride of independence—but not because of dog or cane or human arm, and not because of your ability to read Braille or use a computer. These are the trappings of independence, not the substance of it. They should be learned, and used when needed—but they should be regarded only as means, not ends. Our independence comes from within. A slave can have keen eyesight, excellent mobility, and superb reading skills—and still be a slave. We are achieving freedom and independence in the only way that really counts—in rising self-respect, growing self-confidence, and the will and the ability to make choices." Choosing a sighted guide over a cane in certain circumstances is just fine when it is clearly a choice based on expediency

and not a choice being made because one lacks the skills and confidence for independent travel.

So, as the 4th of July holiday approaches, let us honor the hard work of the parents and teachers who work with blind kids to develop the alternative skills of blindness. And let's also remember the wonderful blind role models at the NFB and Colorado Center for the Blind who help blind kids believe in themselves in ways that sighted parents cannot do. Skills and confidence lead to independence. Let's celebrate that every day!



COME TO OUR SUMMER PICNIC!

Parents of blind and visually impaired children...DONT' MISS THE FUN!! We're going to have a day filled with picnic fare, games and activities for parents and kids. Join with us as we share the day with young blind mentors who will engage us (and our children) in all the joys of an old fashioned picnic. There will be food (of course) and games...tug of war, three legged race, ball games and more. It's rumored that a "jumping castle" will be on site.

You and your kids will have a great time enjoying a summer picnic that includes everyone!

It will be helpful to us if you R.S.V.P. to let us know you are coming, but if you're the "last minute" type, don't let that deter you from joining in. All are welcome no matter what. If you are putting this event on your calendar, it would be great if you would let us know how many adults and children will be coming with names and ages of the children. We want to be prepared!

JUST COME...or help us out and reply to: 303-778-1130 ext. 305 (a voice mailbox) or email copobc@gmail.com. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

WHAT: NFB of Denver and Parents Summer Picnic

WHERE: Colorado Center for the Blind

2233 W. Sheppard Ave.
Littleton, CO 80120

WHEN: Saturday, July 27, 2013
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

(There will be a meeting of the NFB starting at 10:00 a.m. and you are more than welcome to attend. We love company! The picnic activities will begin following the meeting...at about 11:15 a.m.)

*Sandwiches, chips, soda, water and desserts will be provided. If you care to contribute a "finger food" side dish or dessert, we would gladly set it out! Thanks.



**PHAMALY PRESENTS
"FIDDLER ON THE ROOF"**

This month the Phamaly Theatre Company will perform the musical "Fiddler on the Roof" in the Space Theatre located at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Complex. The story centers on Tevye, the father of five daughters, and his attempts to maintain his family and Jewish religious traditions while outside influences encroach upon their lives. Now in its 24th season, Phamaly is an award-winning Colorado based Theatre Company comprised entirely of performers with a wide range of disabilities. The musical opens on Saturday, July 20. **An audio described and ASL Signed performance is scheduled for Sunday, July 28 at 2:00 p.m. On that day there will be a backstage sensory tour at 11:00 a.m.** The sensory tour brings individuals on stage for a tactile experience, touching elements of the set, costumes, and prop pieces. The tour is free but advance reservations are required by calling the Phamaly office at 303-575-0005. Tickets can be purchased by calling Denver Center Ticketing at 303-893-4100; online at

www.phamaly.org; or at the Denver Center Ticket Office, located at the Helen Bonfils Theatre Complex in the Denver Performing Arts Complex.



**CCB YOUTH TRACK
JULY ACTIVITIES**

Brent Batron, Director of Youth Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind announces the following exciting programs coming up this month.



WHEN: July 11
TIME: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

VSA (Very Special Arts) and the Colorado Center for the Blind will be conducting a **PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP** for blind and visually impaired students. This is for ages 10 and up. Local kids will be matched up with students from the Center's summer programs. Teams will be taking pictures of a variety of objects with the intention of being part of the VSA gallery opening in the fall. Please contact Brent Batron if interested. Space is limited. Call [303-778-1130 x 222](tel:303-778-1130x222) or email bbatron@gmail.com by July 8th.



WHEN: July 19
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CHEMISTRY SEMINAR for ages 12 and up. Blind chemist, Dr. Cary Supalo, professor of chemistry at Illinois State University, will be conducting a full-day science seminar at the chemistry lab on the Auraria Campus. We will learn how to conduct experiments using non-visual techniques. Lunch will be provided! Please RSVP by July 14, to Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 ext. 222 or email bbatron@cocenter.org.



WHEN: July 20
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

SUMMER SCIENCE SEMINAR for ages 12 and up. The Colorado Center for the Blind will be hosting its second annual Summer Science Seminar. We will have four presenters including professors from Metro State University, CU Boulder Computer Science professors, Play-Well Teknologies and more. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by July 14 to Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 ext. 222 or email bbatron@cocenter.org.