

# E-CONNECTOR

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

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### PICTURE THIS!

Imagine this scenario: The teacher hands out a diagram of the solar system. The students observe the relative sizes of the planets and their locations in relation to the sun. The blind student, however, holds a meaningless piece of paper. BUT, WAIT! There is a fast and simple way to make that diagram tactile. With the Sensational BlackBoard, a piece of copy paper and an ordinary pen, a sighted assistant can quickly trace the outlines of the planets depicted on the handout. The copy paper now has a raised line tactile image of the solar system and the student can follow the class discussion.

The Sensational BlackBoard is a thin plastic board with a rubberized coating on one side. It is just slightly larger than a sheet of paper, light weight,

and can be easily carried in a backpack. Ann Cunningham, who teaches art at the Colorado Center for the Blind, developed the Sensational BlackBoard in answer to the need for an inexpensive, portable means to get tactile access to images. Imagine the possibilities... Ann encourages her students to use the BlackBoard creatively to draw their own pictures. The Orientation and Mobility Instructor might use the BlackBoard to illustrate the layout of a neighborhood or an intersection. The parent of a toddler might use the BlackBoard to raise the outline of Cookie Monster in a coloring book so the blind child can feel Cookie Monster's shape and color him in.

Here are two links to video that might help you understand how the Sensational BlackBoard works. The first is an [interview of Ann Cunningham](#) that appeared on Channel 9 News on Friday, May 4, 2012. Another helpful [youtube video](#) shows how to use the Sensational BlackBoard. To order the Sensational BlackBoard (\$29.95), go to [www.sensationalbooks.com](http://www.sensationalbooks.com).

**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](mailto:copobc@gmail.com), attention Julie Hunter, editor

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## PARENT BLOG

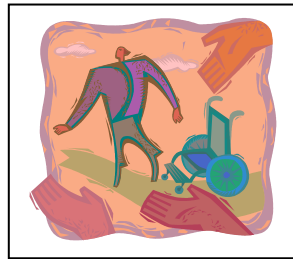
A new blog for parents and teachers of blind children has recently debuted. Mary Jo Hartle is a blind mom, a teacher of blind and visually impaired kids, a certified orientation and mobility instructor and, now, a blogger! The focus of the blog is to offer discussion on how parents and teachers can help children become successful. Mary Jo uses the challenges of gaining independence on the playground as a metaphor for life and has named her blog, "Making it on the Playground."

Here's a snapshot of the blog from one of her early posts:

"It is my opinion that there are five essential elements needed for a successful playground: swings, monkey bars, a big toy (complete with slide), kickball field, and tetortator (sic). Without these elements a playground is just, well...not as great as it could be. Similarly, there are five essential elements for success which I believe help blind individuals to be great. They are qualities which parents and teachers should help foster in blind children to help them navigate life's playgrounds as

successfully as possible. Over the next few posts, I will be introducing you to all five of these elements. ... The Swings—"It's Okay to be Blind." I chose the swings to represent the first element which is that it is okay to be blind. This sounds easier said than done, but having a positive attitude about one's blindness is key to all the other elements falling into place .... "

To read more of Mary Jo Hartle's blog go to [www.makingitontheplayground.com](http://www.makingitontheplayground.com)



## WEBSITE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

"We Connect Now" (<http://weconnectnow.wordpress.com/>) is a website developed in an effort to connect and integrate college students with disabilities as a virtual community. One of the goals of this site is to help college students with disabilities to succeed in their studies by getting the information and support they need, through resources, links, and blogs. There is a page devoted to upcoming legislation that affects people with disabilities. Another page

about jobs is designed to help empower people with disabilities to find employment through job posting and job searching tips. Check it out!



## SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

The Colorado Talking Book Library (CTBL) summer reading program will run from June 11 to August 5, 2012. The themes for the program are "Dream Big, READ!" for the younger kids and "Own the Night" for teens. A reading list with titles related to the themes will be sent upon registration. Participants are asked to read at least two and a half hours each week (Monday through Sunday) and call a reader advisor each week to log the number of hours spent reading. The names of the top ten readers will be entered into a grand prize drawing and the winner will receive a choice of a \$25.00 gift certificate to amazon.com or Barnes & Noble. Call the CTBL at 303-727-9277 or 800-685-2138 for more information about signing up for the great summer 2012 reading challenge!

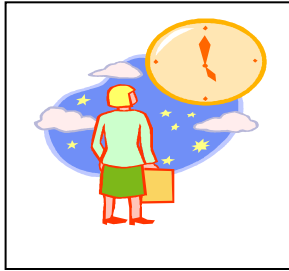


### NFBCO VACATION TRAVEL RAFFLE

How about a trip to Hawaii? Or maybe a Mediterranean cruise? You decide! The NFB of Colorado is now selling raffle tickets for a \$3500 travel agency certificate that allows the winner to choose how to spend their winning vacation dollars. You can use your travel agency credit to purchase anything the agency is able to book for you...hotels, air fare, cruises, vacation packages...you decide. Tickets sell for \$10 each or three for \$20. The winning ticket will be drawn on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado state convention banquet. The winner need not be present at the drawing. Proceeds from the raffle will support the NFBCO Scholarship fund and B.E.L.L., the NFB children's Braille enrichment program.

To purchase tickets call Lisa Bonderson at 303-504-5979 or [lbonderson@labarrelaw.com](mailto:lbonderson@labarrelaw.com)

Help support our programs and...Have a Great Trip! :-)



### THERE'S STILL TIME...

The agenda for the upcoming 2012 Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind has been posted on the [NFB website](#). The convention will be held at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas from June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup>. Take a [look at the agenda](#) and see what an exciting and interesting array of workshops, speakers and exhibits awaits. Here is a list of the sessions being presented by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children as taken from the agenda. This may make many of us think twice and call our travel agent!

#### NOPBC SESSIONS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

- \* Technology in the Classroom
- \*Movement and Exploration for the Young Blind Child
- \*Tactile Graphics: maps, illustrations, charts, and graphs
- \*Reading Issues: Getting to the Root of the Problem
- \*Technology: When, Where, How?
- \*Creative Classroom Solutions for the Child with Additional Disabilities

\*Out and About: Independent Mobility for Your School-Aged Child

\*Reading Strategies for the Blind/VI Student: What Works?

\*NOPBC Children's Fashion Show

\*Braille Book Fair-- A book lover's dream! Free new and used Braille and print/Braille books.

\*IEP Basics for Parents of Blind/VI Students

\*What Do We Appreciate? The Nemeth Code!

\*IEP Development and Legal Process Overview



### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Saturday, June 16

What: LITTLETON HOME AND GARDEN TOUR—a fundraiser to benefit the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB).

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Where: Begin at the CCB—2233 W. Sheppard Ave. Littleton, CO 80120

Tickets: \$20 in advance or \$25 on the day of the event. Buy at [www.coloradocenterfortheblind.org](http://www.coloradocenterfortheblind.org), call 303-778-1130, or purchase at the Colorado Center for the Blind.