

Vision Newsletter



Issue 2

Spring 2009

Who we are:

Itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired

- Glenda Kerr
kerrgl@lkdsb.net
- Susan Vollmar
vollmasu@lkdsb.net
- Emily Wilson
wilsonem@lkdsb.net
- Susan McEwen
mcewensu@lkdsb.net

Summertime Fun

As the weather warms up and school days grow fewer, look ahead to the range of activities possible this summer.

The outdoors in our area is gorgeous, and may provide all the activities you desire, but if you are looking for something a little more structured, try a summer camp or other activity available through CNIB, W Ross Macdonald School or your community.



Music Camp for Braille Users

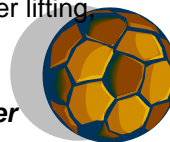
July 19-25, 2009–W. Ross Macdonald School, Brantford—ages 8-21
clelland@rogers.com or Dawn @ 519-578-5389

CNIB Lake Joseph Summer Camps

- provide variety of programs for kids www.cnib.ca/en/about/facility/lake-joseph/summer-camping/default.aspx or 1-877-748- 4028

Ontario Blind Sports Association (OBSA)

- offers a variety of sports programs throughout the year including swimming, wrestling, power lifting track & field.



OBSA Summer Sports Camp

July 6-10, 2009–W. Ross Macdonald School, Brantford—ages 10-18
www.blindsports.on.ca

IEWS Camp Freedom

July 12-17, 2009
W. Ross Macdonald School, Brantford
Focus on creating independence in the kitchen.
clelland@rogers.com or Dawn @ 519-578-5389



Local Community Camps

Check out what is available in your community! Here are a couple of websites to start you off:

- City of Sarnia:
www.city.sarnia.on.ca/visit.asp?sectionid=76
- Pathways Centre, Sarnia:
www.pathwayscentre.org/main/ns/28/doc/140
- YMCA of Chatham Kent:
www.ckymca.com/Default.aspx?Menu=164

Fall Camp

IEWS is holding its 3rd annual Tim Horton's Camp Oct. 2-4, 2009. This will be a family camp in St. George Past events include hiking, rock climbing, the flying squirrel, crafts, campfire, games, exploring the working farm etc... With enough families registered we hope to be able to book the zip line!!



Cabins at Lake Joe include accessible wooden walkways to connect them to all important areas



Lake Joe is located in the beautiful Muskokas

Lake Joseph Camp

Welcome to Lake Jo! Whether you are a past camper or someone new we want to welcome you to Lake Jo for the upcoming 2009 summer camp season. Located at the north end of Lake Joseph in Muskoka, Lake Jo is a fully accessible recreational facility that offers unique specialized camping experiences for people of all ages who are living with vision loss.

www.cnib.ca/en/about/facility/lake-joseph/summer-camping/Default.aspx

Students from our program have enjoyed their past experiences at "Lake Joe". Students have attended with their teachers some years during Itinerant Week, but usually students attend on their own or with their families.

FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

VIEWSON is a provincial organization working together to ensure that all children who are blind or have low vision are given the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

VIEWSON helps families receive the information, resources and support that they need.

VIEWSON educates policy makers, families and the public about the needs and abilities of children who are blind or have low vision.

Members Enjoy:

- Quarterly VIEWSON letter which highlight great places to explore, Orientation and Mobility concepts, ideas or ways to teach daily living skills, updates on policy and programming, upcoming events and various other features.
- Opportunities to promote learning through real life experiences.

Current initiatives:

- Advocating to ensure that every child who is blind or has low vision our province receives the Specialist Teacher, Orientation and Mobility Instructor, Transcriber and Educational Assistant support in their school, as mandated in Policy and Procedures Memorandum 76C.
- Promoting the necessity of the implementation of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), as identified in the Canadian National Standards, taught to all children who are identified as either blind or having low vision in our province. As well as literacy, numeracy, orientation/ mobility and assistive technology, these standards include social, independent living, personal management, recreation, leisure, career, life management, visual efficiency and self-determination skills.

- Supporting short term placements to work on specific skills or remedial work for children who are blind or have low vision and their families.
- Creating partnerships with organizations, educators and researchers to improve opportunities and standards for children who are blind or have low vision.
- Hosting workshops for members and the community interested in learning more about the needs and abilities of children who are blind or have low vision.
- Advocating with other stakeholders to have quality preschool programs available province-wide for children who are blind or have low vision.
- Advocating for increased access to reading materials in braille (uncontracted and contracted), tactile and large print format.



Taken from VIEWSON website:
www.viewson.ca

VIEWSON Parent Meeting

A recent meeting was held with Chatham Kent parents as well as Julie Spry, President of VIEWSON and Dawn Clelland a VIEWSON member.

This meeting was designed for planning and creating goals for supports and events in the local area.

Parents were provided with information on short-term placements for children with visual impairments and other initiatives being taken by VIEWSON.

Parents shared their children's successes and

their concerns for their education.

A similar meeting is being considered for parents in Lambton County in the fall.

Parents who are members of VIEWSON and have contact with other parents can be considered for SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) membership.

Please contact Glenda Kerr at kerrgl@lkdsb.net for further information about the meeting in Lambton County.

All parents are welcome

VIEWSON Annual Conference

to attend this year's VIEWSON Annual Conference.

Saturday, May 9, 2009
Holiday Inn
30 Fairway Road, S.
Kitchener, ON

Please RSVP
VIEWSON c/o Dawn Clelland
58 Fairview Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2H 3E8
clelland@rogers.com
519 578 5389



Last years agenda was fantastic. Contact Susan Vollmar Vollmasu@lkdsb.net if you would like to carpool.





Food for Thought

“Over There!” by Cathy Anne Murtha



As my guide dog and I stood in line at the checkout of the market, I asked the cashier what I considered a simple question: “Where are the napkins, please?” Her response was hurried, but sincere: “Over there.” Emerging from the light rail for the first time, I managed to catch the attention of a passerby. “Please sir, can you tell me where I might catch bus 63?” A kind voice offered a pleasant response before disappearing into the cacophony of the early afternoon, “You can catch it ‘over there.’” So many things reside ‘over there’ – napkins, bus stops, pencils, pens, clothing racks, department stores and even my shoes! A never-ending supply of important and indispensable items and locales all reside in this place which is shrouded in mystery and intrigue. I stand in perplexed silence after learning that something is ‘over there.’ It is a place I have never been and have no hope of finding on my own. My guide dog is quite skilled in finding chairs, stairs, elevators, escalators, helping me cross streets, and can even find me the Diet Pepsi display at Food Town; however, when I tell her to find ‘over there,” her little bottom hits the floor and a small whimper tells me that she is as confused as I. We will not be going ‘over there’ today. “Over there” has caused me a bit of vexation, a lot of confusion, and on occasion, made my heart race. I have discovered that ‘over there’ can be a dangerous place. One day, while crossing a street, I heard a driver’s irritated voice shout out a warning of a truck bearing down on me from ‘over there.’ Shadow artfully dodged the oncoming vehicle and pulled me to the safety of the curb. Our hearts were both racing as we took a few moments to compose ourselves. Close encounters with ‘over there’ can be frightening experiences. Although many blind people have wondered as to the exact location of ‘over there,” few

have dared to venture forth in an actual exploration of the mysterious place. One day, while standing in line at the supermarket, I asked the clerk where I might find the aspirin. With a cheery smile in her voice, she informed me that the aspirin was located ‘over there.’ With a weary sigh, I decided that I would take the extra step



that would unravel the mystery that had vexed my compatriots since the beginning of time. Taking a deep breath, and attempting to look nonchalant, I smiled at the clerk. “Where,” I asked, “is over there?” I imagined the girl’s shocked expression. I felt her sharing condescending and concerned looks with her fellows in the store. The silence grew palpable as they mulled the possibility of allowing a blind person access to the forbidden land. She had no choice; she would have to tell me how to find “over there!” I had won! Exhilaration swept through me as I waited in breathless anticipation. A victorious smile crept to my lips; my hand tightened on the handle of Shadow’s harness. We would soon be going ‘over there!” The clerk’s voice reeked with resignation as the decision was made. “That way!” she said.



Summer Reading

Remember the libraries this summer to keep up on your reading! Our libraries feature audio books, large print books, etc.

Libraries also have events and programs for children and youth. Check out the Lambton County library for "Teen 411", a fun program including socializing, free food and volunteer hours.

- www.lclmg.org/lclmg/YourLibrary/tabid/52/Default.aspx



Check out the great programs available at the Chatham-Kent Libraries too! Programs vary by location, so look up what is near you!

- <http://www.chatham-kent.ca/default.htm>

Adaptive Equipment for the Summer

Students are learning new skills for using adaptive equipment and are making great progress! Some students are learning typing and others are using this skill and others everyday in their classrooms.

Speak to your resource teacher or principal about how to keep up these skills over the summer!



"The Opportunity to Fail" by Patrick Worth

Success has been defined as the ability to go from failure to failure without becoming discouraged. It is the old familiar idea of trial and error: if at first you do not succeed, try, try, again. Throughout various stages of life, we use this technique to find out what works for us and what does not. It means venturing into unfamiliar territory. It means taking risks. But from this process we gain the wisdom and toughness required for maturity and independence. The best educational program are those in which we are given responsibilities and then allowed to make mistakes. We

find out that mistakes are to learn and go forward from.

However, children with disabilities are often "protected" from opportunities by those around them, who want to shield them from discouragement of failure: the realities of life. This negative "father knows best" approach emphasizes what can not be done rather than encouraging what might be accomplished by trying. It assumes failure instead of recognizing that even an attempt to try is positive in itself. This attitude fosters dependence instead of independence for

people with disabilities. It overlooks the fact that children will mature and accept responsibility if they are not forced into dependency.

Every developing human being with disabilities and without, needs an environment which encourages trying. Everyone must have an environment which offers positive opportunities to learn from mistakes, instead of negative thinking of what cannot be done. Everyone needs opportunities to try and an opportunity to fail—in other words, an opportunity to learn.