

ACVREP NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 1, 2007

ACVREP – Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals

Table of Contents:

- 1. Message From ACVREP's Chair, Judy van Naerssen.**
- 2. Welcome Vision Enhance!**
- 3. The Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation: Looking At Things A Different Way.**
- 4. The Best Of Both Worlds - An Interview With Marc Gillard Of Guide Dogs For The Blind.**
- 5. ACVREP Thanks The Arizona School For The Deaf And Blind!**
- 6. Hadley School For The Blind – A Change In Free Courses Offered To ACVREP Certificants.**
- 7. 2007 Touch Of Genius Prize For Innovation Winners.**
- 8. Job Openings – Toledo, Ohio.**
- 9. Quote Of The Day!**

Message From ACVREP's Chair, Judy van Naerssen

By now, many of you have learned of the recently announced resignation of ACVREP's President, Sharon Mikrut. During her five-year tenure with the Academy, Sharon has contributed tireless energy, effort and skill to the delivery of high quality professional services to our certificants and the community of providers of rehabilitation and education professionals. She has truly strengthened and grown the Academy.

Having just returned from two full days of meetings of ACVREP's Board of Directors this past weekend, as ACVREP's Board Chair I want to reassure you, our certificants, educators, CE providers and friends in the field that the Board remains fully committed to protecting and enhancing the needs and professionalism of our certificants. We remain dedicated to the continued mission of strengthening and growing ACVREP.

In order to ensure the continuation of first-quality full service to our certificants and to provide the smoothest transition possible the Board has:

1. Undertaken a two-day visit to the headquarters of the Academy in order to be fully cognizant of the detailed operation and needs of the organization.
2. Developed a job description, job announcement and timeline for filling the vacancy created by our President's resignation. The job description and announcement are expected to be available for release and will be on our website no later than the end of the first full week of November.
3. Formed a six-member search committee to launch a national search for the new President.
4. Begun developing plans and practices to ensure a smooth and professional transition.

In order to ensure continued uninterrupted service in our national office, we have negotiated a plan with our current President and she will remain in the office on a part time basis after the effective date of her resignation. During this time she will assist in the transition.

Be assured, your Board is fully committed to the continued growth of ACVREP and to maintaining and enhancing the Academy's strongest commitment to its mission, professionalism and the needs of its certificants.

Judith van Naerssen OTRL, CLVT

Welcome Vision Enhance!

Quality Products and Affordable Pricing – the business philosophy for the line of products from Blackstone International, LTD. – the manufacturer focused on helping people with low vision difficulties see better!

Vision Enhance is a line of products specifically designed and engineered to help people with low vision to be able to read and reduce eye strain. The products have been placed in Low Vision Clinics, such as the Wilmer Eye Institute (Johns Hopkins Medicine) and the Deicke Center for Visual Rehabilitation. One of the key items features a Full Spectrum Certified (FSL Certified) Floor Lamp with a 42 Watt FSL Certified Bulb that produces output equivalent to a 250 Watt Incandescent Bulb. The lamp provides the benefit of natural daylight, allowing your patients to work with less eyestrain and perform the simplest tasks easier and longer. When using the lamp, text is clear and crisp, colors appear true-to-life, and glare is reduced. Evaluated and developed with recommendations by low vision care professionals, the Vision Enhance Floor Lamp has an extra long flexible neck and patented directional diffuser making it easier to direct the light exactly where the consumer needs it the most.

Visit www.visionenhance.com to review the lamp. In keeping with the Vision Enhance philosophy of quality products at affordable pricing, the suggested retail of the Vision Enhance 42 watt Floor Lamp is \$79.99. The product comes with a 30 day guarantee and if you are not satisfied, you may return the product. To learn more, email customerservice@blackstoneltd.com and a representative will be pleased to contact you.

Watch for additional Vision Enhance announcements over the next few months. If you have new product ideas to benefit patients experiencing low vision difficulties, please email your thoughts to customerservice@blackstoneltd.com.

ACVREP does not approve or disapprove of the products, services, policies, procedures, etc. of any advertiser. However, all advertisers are expected to conduct their business in a legal manner and in accordance with all municipal, county, state, and federal laws.

The Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation: Looking At Things A Different Way

It's fall in New England. We're enjoying crisp, blue-sky days and the trees are on fire with color. The smell of wood smoke fills the air and piles of sweaters have been pulled from cedar chests throughout the region. Truly, the fall is a special time in New England.

It's also a time of change and change is what Fidelco is all about. Our clients now cover North America and we are serving more of them than ever before. These services range from our pioneering In-community Placement, to follow-up visits throughout the U.S and Canada, to providing successor dogs to long-time Fidelco guide dog users.

This concept of "clients served" is a major change in how we view ourselves. It goes beyond simply putting four paws on the ground next to our clients. Our value, as expressed to us by our guide dog users again and again, is the close attention we pay to them before, during and after the application, selection and placement processes.

"Clients served" - looking at things another way.

Something that hasn't changed is our sound fiscal and managerial practices. That's something to ponder as you make those important referral decisions now and in the future. Fidelco has received its second, consecutive four-star rating from Charity Navigator, an independent, non-profit organization that provides in-depth information on 501(c)3 companies.

To quote from Charity Navigator, "Only 14% of the charities we rated have received at least two consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation outperforms most charities in America in its efforts to operate in the most fiscally responsible way possible. This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust."

In addition, Fidelco is a recipient of the International Health & Medical Media Award for Public Service. The "Freddie" award, named for Dr. Fred Gottlieb, a San Francisco Bay area ophthalmologist, brings together the best of the best in recognition of their achievements to promote positive change in the fields of health care and social services. Past recipients include Mary Tyler Moore, Boomer Esiason, the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association.

For more information on Fidelco, visit our Web site at www.fidelco.org.

The Best Of Both Worlds - An Interview With Marc Gillard Of Guide Dogs For The Blind

"I never thought that when I was studying wallabies and cockatoos in Australia that it would eventually lead me into the field of not only being an O&M specialist, but also a Guide Dogs instructor at Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) in the US. Growing up in Australia, it wasn't long before I knew that I wanted to work with animals in some way,

but I never imagined guide dogs. When I graduated from the college, I happened to see an advertisement in a Melbourne newspaper for a cadet, (apprentice) guide dog instructor with Royal Guide Dogs Associations of Australia. I was lucky enough to get an interview, and the conversation I had with my future boss changed my life...." Read more of the interview with Marc Gillard at: www.guidedogs.com/gillard.

Marc's advice to an O&M Specialist whose client may be considering a Guide Dog as an option, is for the O&M Specialist to assess the client, even informally, and to communicate to the client important aspects to take into consideration:

1. Is the person legally blind and in need of a mobility aid to travel safely?
2. Is the person assertive? Do they have the potential to achieve and maintain a leadership position with a dog?
3. Does the person seem to have the motivation to work with a guide dog as a long term mobility aid?
4. Are they dynamically oriented to specific routes and destinations that they will want to navigate once they complete training with their guide dog?
5. Are they able to make safe, independent street crossing decisions?
6. Since a guide dog is an animal, their training needs to be kept up in order to ensure safe travel. Is the person physically capable of controlling a dog and able to provide sufficient, purposeful work to maintain a safe standard of guiding performance?
7. Are they able to provide suitable accommodation for the dog and attend to its needs?

O&M Specialists can certainly assist a prospective guide dog user in preparing for training by emphasizing the difference in environmental information between cane and guide dog travel. A valuable preparation would be to reduce reliance upon shore lining and information available via the cane tip to orientation developed using other strategies, like time-distance estimation and traffic listening skills.

Be sure to read the entire interview and access other areas of interest by following this link: www.guidedogs.com/gillard.

Guide Dog Schools Collaborate with Hadley School for the Blind

Several guide dog schools have collaborated with Hadley School for the Blind to create an on-line course. The course is designed to introduce the guide dog lifestyle and provide the opportunity for an individual to make an informed choice about his/her mobility options. The professional version of the course is online only; the ACE version is online and available in large print, Braille, and cassette. We would like to encourage all O&M Specialists to take the course and to suggest it to their clients so that they can learn more about the mobility options available to them. Please visit www.hadley.edu for more information.

ACVREP Thanks The Arizona School For The Deaf And Blind!

ACVREP would like to thank the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB), specifically Dorinda Rife and Kathy Barry, for providing ten (10) free Brailled copies of the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy beta exam. Beta testing new exams is essential to ensuring a valid, reliable, and legally defensible exam. As such, ACVREP is most appreciative of generous donation.

Hadley School For The Blind – A Change In Free Courses Offered To ACVREP Certificants

Effective January 1, 2008, Hadley's Professional Education Program will be renamed the Hadley School for Professional Studies (HSPS). All current professionals will be part of this new exciting program. For those interested in continuing their studies with Hadley after completion of their current courses, or for new enrollments, please note these important changes:

1. **A modest tuition, ranging from \$99 to \$139, will now be charged for most HSPS courses.**
2. New enrollments will be online only.
3. A cancellation and refund policy has been established.
4. Payment will be taken by credit card, purchase order, or money order in U.S. dollars only.
5. A new Certificate of Achievement will be awarded.

Additional information about the HSPS can be found on the school's Web site: www.hadley.edu/HSPS. Enrollments will not be taken for the HSPS until January 7, 2008.

2007 Touch Of Genius Prize For Innovation Winners

Four years ago, when the Gibney Family Foundation stepped up to the plate to fund "Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius," Frank Gibney stipulated that support for the book was only half of the offering. The other half was support for a \$20,000 prize which would be awarded by National Braille Press each year, to encourage and reward individual innovation, reflecting back on Louis Braille's accomplishments. This year, for the first time, National Braille Press, in partnership with The Gibney Family Foundation, is pleased to announce the winners of the 2007 Touch of Genius Prize for Innovation: Karen Gourgey and Steven Landau for the Talking Tactile Tablet.

The Talking Tactile Tablet (TTT) is an inexpensive and simple computer peripheral device that acts as a viewer for tactile diagrams, maps, and illustrations. Users place one of many overlay sheets on the TTT device and explore a graphic using touch sense and/or vision. Dr. Gourgey and Mr. Landau have created a library of software programs for the Talking Tactile Table system, all promoting tactile literacy.

Dr. Karen Gourgey is Director of the Computer Center for Visually Impaired People (CCVIP) at Baruch College, City University, in New York City, and Steven Landau is Director of Research at Touch Graphics, Inc., also in New York City.

For more information on the 2008 Touch of Genius Prize for Innovation, please visit our website January at: <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/braille/louisbraillebook.html>

Job Openings – Toledo, Ohio

The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio located in a brand new, state of the art facility in Toledo, Ohio has a number of immediate job opportunities available. Located on the shores of Lake Erie, Toledo, Ohio is a community of 300,000 people which provides a mid-western lifestyle with diverse culture opportunities. Toledo is an hour drive to Detroit and Windsor, Canada. To learn more about services offered through The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio, please visit our web page at www.sightcentertoledo.org, and to learn more about the city of Toledo, please visit www.ci.toledo.oh.us.

The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio is seeking an Orientation & Mobility Specialist, and/or a candidate with Rehabilitation Teaching and/or Low Vision experience. Candidate should be certified or certifiable in one of the three areas with successful completion of an approved Orientation and Mobility program and/or Rehabilitation Teaching Program. Additional opportunities available in the area of adaptive technology. The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio serves 16 counties and the position is primarily community based. Candidate must have a valid driver's license; agency vehicles are provided. Position is eligible for a competitive benefit packaging including health and dental insurance and a 403B plan, as well as a generous personal/vacation package, including 10 paid holidays. Please forward resume, with cover letter and references, to dchristensen@sightcentertoledo.org. When responding, please make sure you meet all requirements.

Quote Of The Day!

"Believe you can make a difference, and you will." – Bill Clinton