



CSB Braille Bites Newsletter

November 2009

California State Special Schools

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Welcome!

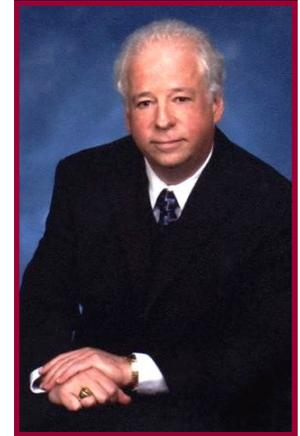
By: Stuart Wittenstein, Superintendent

Welcome to the inaugural edition of **CSB**'s new communication tool, **Braille Bites!** It is our hope that this newsletter will enable us to keep in closer touch with parents, students, staff, alumni, friends, supporters, and advisors to **CSB**. All of these individuals share a common belief in what we can achieve by working together – a top quality education for children who are blind and visually impaired for the students enrolled on our campus and the children throughout California whose educational programs are enhanced because of the support and technical

expertise of **CSB**'s outreach efforts. And why not? **CSB** has been achieving that goal for 150 years now.

As the famous football coach, Vince Lombardi, said, "The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual." And each of you shares in the credit for the successes of our school.

It certainly seems fitting to initiate a new service like **Braille Bites** as we celebrate our 150th year of service to the blind children of California since although we respect and honor the past, we are always striving to improve and look to the future. We



Stuart Wittenstein
Superintendent

look forward to using this newsletter to keep you informed of exciting initiatives at **CSB** and of our events planned to celebrate our 150th year. Thanks for your interest and support of **CSB**, our students, staff, and families.

Celebrating 150 Years of Quality Education

By: Sharon Sacks

2010 marks the 150th anniversary year for the California School for the Blind. **CSB** has educated and provided services to thousands of blind and visually impaired students throughout the state. Our school has a long history of taking a leadership role on a state & national level. Past superintendents (Dr. Richard French & Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld) and school principals (Dr. Phil Hatlen & Dr. Dean Tuttle) have played a

prominent role in creating innovative educational programs for students with visual impairments throughout the U.S. On Thursday, May 13, 2010 the **CSB** community will celebrate with a day of special events, culminating in a wonderful Spring Concert performed by **CSB** students. The anniversary committee is hard at work planning a memorable program, reception, and dinner. Please mark your calendar & plan to attend this special day.

Look Who's New!



Holly Hody
Teacher



Christina Schmoyer
Teacher



Katie Smith
Teacher



Christina Parker
Student Assistant

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

By: Gina Ouellette, School Psychologist

Bullying is a problem that has been on the rise in many schools across the U.S. An estimated 15% to 30% of students nationwide are either bullies or victims of bullying. And some research has shown that as many as 75% of children report being bullied at least once during the school year.

What is bullying? Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional (not accidental or done in fun). Bullying differs from teasing or joking around in that it involves an imbalance of power or strength and is often repeated again and again. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting or punching, repeated teasing or name-calling, intimidation through gestures or social exclusion, or sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the Internet (also known as **cyberbullying**). In the past, bullying was frequently dismissed as a normal part of growing up. However, we now know that there can be serious consequences when bullying goes unchecked. Victims of repeated bullying can develop physical or mental health problems, including depression or low self-esteem. In some cases, children who are bullied later become bullies themselves. Bullying can create a climate of fear and anxiety on school campuses, interfering with students' academic performance and overall enjoyment of school. In addition, bullies themselves are at a higher risk for underachievement and criminal activities in the future.

What are the warning signs that a child is being bullied or that a child

is a bullying someone else? It is important to watch for signs that a child is being bullied or is bullying others. Being aware of the signs helps adults to intervene early and effectively.

Warning signs that a child may be bullied at school include fear or anxiety about going to school, trying to get out of going to school, showing up with unexplained bruises, having few, if any, friends with whom he spends time, seeming unhappy or insecure, demonstrating low self-confidence, and/or appearing sad, moody, or teary after attending school.

Warning signs that a child may be at risk for becoming a bully include lack of empathy for others, impulsivity or hot-headedness, difficulty following rules, a positive view of violence, and/or low self-esteem.

What can adults do about bullying? Many adults are unaware of bullying problems. Bullying often occurs in areas of the school or community that are not well-supervised by adults. Bullying can even occur right in front of adults, but can be difficult to detect because it can be so subtle (e.g., passing threatening notes, making faces or gestures behind adults' backs, social exclusion, etc.). Another reason that adults are often unaware of bullying problems is that many children don't report it. They are afraid that the bully will retaliate by bullying them even more. They may also fear that adults will act inappropriately in dealing with the bully or won't take their concerns seriously.

Continued on page 3

Bullying Prevention and Intervention *(continued)*

If a child tells you that she is being bullied, be supportive and try to gather information from her about the bullying. Empathize with the child and let him know that the bullying is not his fault. Do not encourage physical retaliation. Also, avoid telling the child to “just ignore” the bullying. This may send the message that you are going to ignore the bullying as well. In reality, ignoring the bullying often allows it to become more serious. Assure the child that you will be addressing the problem. Next, be sure to contact the child’s teacher, school psychologist, or principal, or, if the bullying is not happening at school, the person in charge at the location where the bullying is occurring, and alert him or her to the situation. Regularly check-in with the child and site staff to see if the bullying has stopped. If the bullying persists, bring your concerns to staff again.

What is CSB doing to prevent bullying? **CSB** is committed to being a school where all students feel nurtured and safe. **CSB** teachers and staff have completed an in-service on ways to prevent and address bullying. We plan for this to be an ongoing topic of discussion throughout the school year and beyond. In addition, the students have

attended an assembly focused on bullying prevention. We will be holding a school-wide assembly once a month to discuss bullying and related topics, such as student rights and responsibilities, respecting one another, being a good citizen, etc. Our aim is to create a campus where students look out for one another and do not tolerate violence. Already we have seen a difference in the way students are treating one another and how staff respond to student incidents. We are looking forward to developing a comprehensive, long-term bullying prevention strategy and continuing to grow and thrive as a school community.

For questions about bullying or bullying prevention, please contact a school principal or school psychologist, or check out the resources below.

Resources: U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration Stop Bullying Now Campaign (www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov); National Association of School Psychologists (www.nasponline.org); National Center for Bullying Prevention (www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org)

CSB gets a new Fitness room!

CSB has a new fitness center in room 58 – 2. The students are thrilled to have state-of-the-art equipment that includes: treadmills, exercise bikes, elliptical machines, spin bikes, a rowing machine and a variety of weight lifting machines with the brand name of Hoist.



The transition students and the high school students have used this type of equipment at the community based 24 Hour Fitness unit. All of the students have had an in-service on the use of this new equipment.

Staff are welcome to use the fitness center after being

By: Sue Swigart and Mary Alice Ross

checked out by Sue or Mary Alice. Please make an appointment to be in-serviced with them if you have not already done so.

This is a great opportunity for you to meet your fitness goals, or to make new ones!



Parents and Friends

By: Staci Gonzales

The **CSB** Parents & Friends Association is a non-profit organization comprised of caring individuals committed to growth and potential of the blind and visually impaired students that attend the California School for the Blind. Parents and Friends raise funds to foster education, social and recreation supplies and activities that the school budget cannot subsidize. A few of the past activities and equipment include, cross country ski trip; jerseys, goggles, and protective gear for goal ball team; various classroom field trips around the bay area, an annual school carnival and the list continues to grow; The PFA meets a scant four times a year to brainstorm on fundraising, discuss requests for grants and other topics that pertain to the **CSB** campus.

There are no membership dues. The Parents & Friends Association is open to all who are committed to cultivating a student's potential. We are currently recruiting board members, but, all help and interest is welcome. If you can attend a meeting, give some time out of your busy schedule or just have questions, please contact the PFA liaison : Staci Gonzales at (510)794-3800 x216 or at sgonzales@csb-cde.ca.gov

Short Course Program

By: Barbara Maher

CSB has a program on campus which brings students in from all over the state of California. It's called the Short Course Program. The teacher is Barbara Maher. Many **CSB** students have participated in activities with Short Course students as they join classes for art, APE (Adapted Physical Education), and music. Sometimes the Short Course students prepare a meal or snack and invite the **CSB** students to join them in room 56-4.

Students come to **CSB** for intensive instruction in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum. Short Courses includes Braille, abacus, technology, living skills, career education, access to public transportation, and test taking. They stay in the dorms and eat their meals in the dining hall with our full time students.

The following is a schedule of some of the Short Courses being offered this school year.

December 14-18, 2009

– Tactile Graphics and other math

problem areas. Review of how to read tactile graphics, abacus, test-taking strategies, and history of how a standardized test is developed.

January 19-22, 2010

– Tech Week. This is a week spent with the teachers in the Tech Lab at **CSB**. Individually created instruction based on the needs of the students will be provided. When not in the lab, students will participate in on-campus activities as they are scheduled. They will also work on completing course work from their home schools. **Deadline for application is December 11, 2009. Please note this is a four day week at CSB and students will come in on Monday, January 18 at 6:00 p.m.**

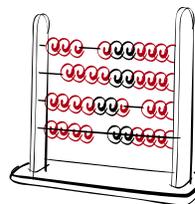
February 1-5, 2010

– Braille and Abacus Booster Week. Geared toward students who need a week of intensive

instruction in Braille and Abacus. Participation in campus activities such as APE, and art will also be included as they are available. The week will also include a cooking project. Class assignments can be worked on throughout the week as time allows.

February 8-11, 2010

– (Date may change based on availability of Academy of Science docents) Science Week Geared toward middle and high school students. A day trip to Ano Nuevo to the elephant seal preserve, a visit to Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve – hands on tide pool tours at low tide and community service project at one of the regional parks.



CSB Gardening Club

By: Jason Tucker

In the times of old, one learned about life by experience, observation, and guided instruction from respected elders. Today, we import asparagus from Peru and oranges from Australia. These foods are picked early, long before ripening to their fullest natural potential.

Many people are moving toward natural foods and I know why. Natural foods and herbal medicines are aimed at feeding the body's natural ability for homeostasis or the ability to maintain its own healthy balance of biochemical nutrients and reactions. Therefore it is logical to believe that if we feed bodies the right balance of good ingredients the outcome will be a balanced, healthy, happy individual.



I found an appropriate Joke on www.carrotmuseum.com that illustrates the changes in the worlds view of medicine and health. A patient says, "I am sick". The following are physician's responses over a timeline from past to present. 3500 years ago – "here eat this root". 2500 years ago – "that root is heathen – say this prayer". 150 years ago – "that is superstition – drink this potion". 50 years ago – "That potion is snake oil – take this pill". 15 years ago – "That pill is no good – take this antibiotic". Today – "That is not nature's way – here eat this root".

Did you know that just by adding a healthy portion of broccoli to your diet you are also taking steps to improve vitamin and mineral balances within

your body. Broccoli works to ease symptoms of the common cold and helps to prevent the development of cataracts. It also works to aid in maintaining good blood pressure and cholesterol; combats osteoporosis, and cancer. It enhances gastrointestinal health, and aids in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, calcium deficiencies, heart disease, and arthritis.



The California School for the Blind (CSB) is proudly expanding its gardening program and is currently planting and caring for various fall crops that will be available for sale as transplants or after harvest for fresh, locally grown produce. We have also begun using the green house to extend the hot season crops such as tomatoes, watermelon, cucumbers and zucchini.

Nurturing and maintaining another life in true balance with the elements of nature is rewarding and motivating in many ways as our students are discovering. Our business is organized and ran by students with the support of you, our extended community. We hope that your sun



shines, your roots spread wide and deep, and your teachings reach high, far and wide like the fruits...and veggies of our labor and love.

Look Who's New!



Susan Hart,
Laura Selinger and
Elizabeth Taira
Counselors



Jason Tucker
Counselor



Tulsi Basyal
Student Assistant



Cindy Green
Student Assistant

CSB Low Vision Clinic

By: Francey Liefert

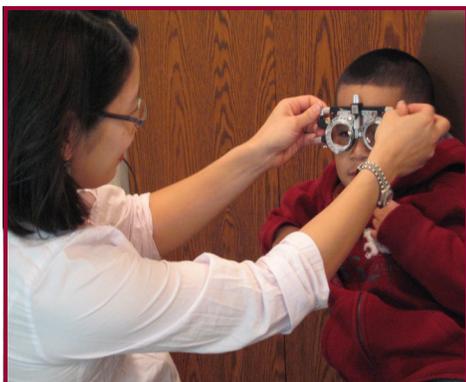
At the **CSB** Low Vision Clinic our attending optometrist, Cindy Sakai, OD, and this year's resident optometrist, Caitlin Campbell, OD, have been hard at work providing low vision exams for new **CSB** students who have low vision, as well as for **CSB** students who have not had a low vision exam for a few years.

What is a low vision exam?

The low vision exam is different from the eye exam given by a regular ophthalmologist or optometrist. The low vision exam concentrates on measuring the students' vision in several ways and on determining whether any low vision devices would be helpful to the students. Diagnosis and eye health are not primary focuses of low vision exams.

Acuity measurements

When we think of measuring vision, we usually think of the distance acuity measurement of 20



over another number. What does the 20 mean? It's the number of feet the viewer needs to be from the visual target in order to see the amount of

detail a person who is fully sighted can see from the second number in the measurement. For example, students who have 20/400 acuity need to be 20 feet away from a visual target in order to see the amount of detail a fully-sight person can see from 400 feet away.

Near vision is measured differently. The optometrists look at what the smallest letters or symbols are that a student can read or identify from a measured distance. For example, a student's near acuity might be 2M from 9 centimeters. In common speech, this means that the smallest print the student can read is 16 point font from four inches away. (Our

optometrists are good about noting the common way of stating sizes, as well as the optometric notation.) With this near acuity the student will need print and symbols that are around 24 point font for sustained reading. A bookstand will also be helpful to avoid neck strain.

Refraction

It is important to make sure that students who can benefit from eye glasses have the best prescription possible. Our optometrists take time to determine what prescription, if any, would be useful. They use loose lenses rather than the machine used in a regular optometry office. With these trial lenses they can make subtle changes, and allow more light in during the exam.

Many of the students seen at the low vision clinic cannot benefit from eye glasses because of the eye condition they have. None of our students who have low vision can be corrected to 20/20 vision with eye glasses.

Contrast sensitivity

The low vision optometrists at our clinic have several other ways of measuring vision. Contrast sensitivity is a measurement of how well a student can see a shape which fades in consecutive presentations until it is almost the same shade as the background. This measurement is good for predicting whether the student will be likely to notice subtle changes in terrain, as well as whether school materials need to be printed in high contrast.

Visual fields

Many low vision students have gaps in their peripheral visual fields. The optometrists use penlights to measure this. Students are asked to look at a penlight directly in front of them. Another penlight is brought into the students' visual fields from behind them, and the optometrist notes when they first see it. This is repeated for the entire area around the central field of vision. If a student is missing vision in

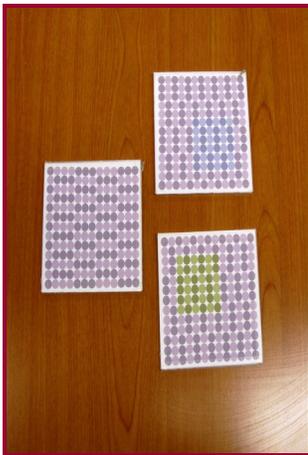
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CSB Low Vision Clinic (continued)

one area, it may be important to use a white cane for safety. It will also let the teacher know where to present educational materials and where the best seat is for the student in class.

Color vision

A more familiar measurement our optometrists take is of color vision. A simple tool called the F2 plates is used for this. These are three squares which have a purple pattern printed on them. One of the plates just has the purple pattern. One has a square of



chartreuse green within the pattern, and the other has a small blue square within the pattern. Students who have a red/green color deficit do not see the green square, and students who have a yellow/blue deficit do not see the blue square. This doesn't mean that they don't see colors at all. It means that if colors are pastel or muddy, it will be difficult to identify them. Students who have color deficits need educational materials in bright colors.

Contact us

If you have questions about your son or daughter's vision, the optometrists and the teacher who coordinates the clinic would be happy to hear from you. You can phone us at 510-794-3800 x228 or email [Francey Liefert at fliefert@csb-cde.ca.gov](mailto:fliefert@csb-cde.ca.gov).

Rocket Shop opens!

The Rocket Shop doors are now open!

In case you haven't heard, the Rocket Shop is a student-run staff snack bar. We have been very busy training students, setting up schedules and working out the kinks!

The Rocket Shop is located in room 52-4 and is open



from 9:30 to 1:30 Monday through Thursday and from 9:30 to 12:00 on Fridays.

The Rocket Shop is a "cash only" business, unless you are purchasing school t-shirts, hats and bags. We can take your check made out to PFA for these items.



By: Karen Courtemanche



We hope to see you soon!

CSB Karate Spotlight

By: Anthony Daniels

Jonathan Wong has been practicing karate for 4 years and is a yellow belt. Jonathan is from Riverbank, California and enjoys the hard work of karate, but liked that he still gets to have fun while practicing. He really enjoys the amusement parks, tournaments and performances in which the team participates.



His goal in Martial Arts is to achieve his Black Belt and be able to defend himself.

Jonathan has competed in Chico and Oregon, medaling in both events.

The karate class meets every Tuesday and Thursday night at 8:00 in the gym.

December 2009

Happy Holidays!

Winter Concert Matinee - December 09

Community Advisory Committee Meeting - December 10

Winter Concert Evening Performance - December 10

Winter Break—December 21- January 1

National Cotton Candy Day! - December 7



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January 2010

Happy New Year!

Classes resume - January 4

No School - January 14

No School - January 15

Holiday - January 18



National Popcorn Day! - January 19



California School for the Blind

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