



CA STATE SPECIAL
SCHOOLS

Braille Bites

California School for the Blind

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Superintendent's message

By: Stuart Wittenstein

Casey Stengel said: Managing is getting paid for home runs that someone else hits.

As we close the 2010-2011 school year, we look back on a year of many home runs hit by our students and staff. In this edition of Braille Bites you will read about our graduating students.

They have grown so much and accomplished many goals on their way to becoming the most independent young men and women they can be.

In addition, this school year was a year of great programmatic accomplishment and recognition. In October 2010, the Lucky Touch Fortune Cookie Company was recognized with a national award by the American Printing House for the Blind with their "Creative Use of Braille Award." And in May 2011, the Rocket Shop Café was recognized as a statewide program of excellence and innovation with the Grazer Outstanding Achievement in Learning (GOAL) Award.

Also, within the pages of the



Braille Bites you will read about the new Education Foundation to support CSB's activities, continuing innovative programming like our Short Courses, new beginnings like the Rock Climbing Wall, and interesting ideas about cooking and chess for blind students (although not necessarily at the same time!). We wish we had even more space to let you know all the fun, innovative, and educational activities at our school.

As I close, I wish each of you a wonderful summer – and to each of our graduates and their families, thanks for allowing us to work with you these past years. We have enjoyed getting to know each of you and we wish you a successful transition to your next stages in life.

Ready, set, GO!!!

By: Sharon Sacks

The **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind Education Foundation (CSBEP) has a Tax ID Number, and final papers are being filed. We should be up and running by September 2011. We plan to have our first organizational meeting for our Board of Directors, if you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Sharon Sacks for more information. Please mark your calendars! We plan to have a White Cane Walk in October 2011.

Short Course Program

By: Barbara Maher

The Short Course Program is alive and well at **CSB**. We had over 60 students come to our campus for a variety of short courses covering such topics as Technology, Low Vision, Creative Writing, Braille and Abacus, Elementary Science, Empowerment, Transportation, Math, GPS and two off campus weeks of science exploration of the California coast.

We have a tentative schedule for next fall that will cover the same topics but with some new things added. We are planning a Fine Arts Week which has been requested by parents and teachers. **CSB** teachers and community volunteers will guide students through the exploration of art, drama, music and dance activities. In December, we are inviting elementary age students to come for a week of living skills activities centered around the spirit of giving. We will do community service projects for the Humane Society and bake goodies for the homeless shelter.

CSB students look forward to the arrival of the Short Course students on Sunday evening. Many students return for more than one Short Course so they are welcomed back by their new friends in the dorms. Some Short Courses include **CSB** students and that allows us to mix it up a bit. It gives **CSB** students a chance to participate with some of the new kids in the classroom or in the community.

Many weeks, the Short Course students cook lunch and invite **CSB** students to join them in the classroom. The lunch menu has included baked chicken, rice dishes, pizza, salads, pasta and yummy desserts. The students often want to make something that is a favorite at home. This may require a phone call to get a recipe from mom or grandma for an ethnic addition to our menu. It's always a treat for the **CSB** students. We're looking forward to some new friends next year and the chance to welcome back some old friends to the **CSB** Short Course Program.

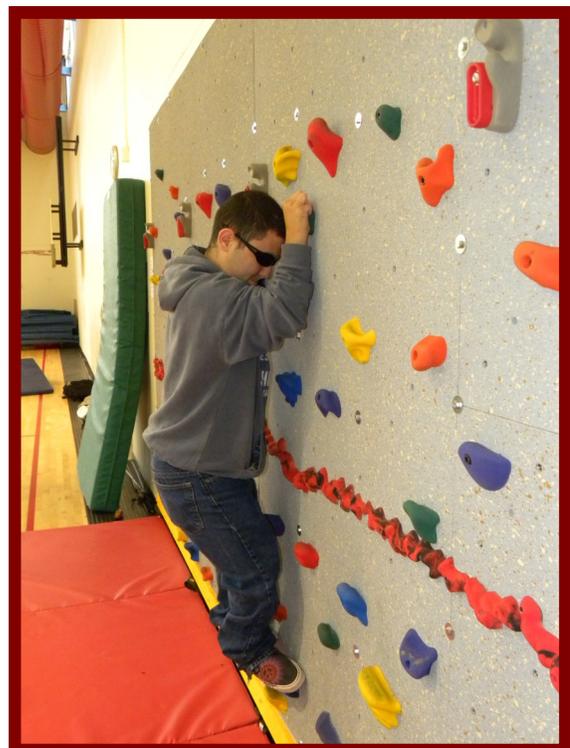
Rock Climbing wall

By: Sue Swigart

In early spring the gym had a bit of “reconstructive surgery” on the southwest wall. Through the support of business services, administration, and the entire **CSB** community, and through the work of Bob Pelayo and Danilo Serrano, a traverse climbing wall was installed! The wall is 8 feet high and 20 feet wide. It is meant to be climbed across its width. No ropes, harnesses, or other special equipment is needed. The wall is covered with holds, and sports a red “foot line” 3 feet from the bottom. Climber’s feet must be below the foot line at all times.

Students have been busy learning safety including spotting responsibilities. Body and spatial awareness, as well as directionality are spotlighted while students, with the assistance of staff and peers, direct them to find the next hold. When a student reaches the end of the wall or is too tired to go on, they step down onto a safety mat. They are never more than a couple of feet off the ground, yet they learn the basic climbing postures and techniques, and put fitness (endurance, flexibility, and strength) to practical use. Those hours logged in the fitness center pay off on the climbing wall!

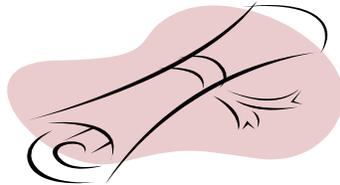
Climbing is an activity suited to life-long fitness. Many communities have climbing gyms. Many newer playgrounds have elementary-level climbing elements leading to slides or other more traditional activity equipment. Once students master the basic climbing techniques on the traverse wall, it is our hope that some of them will choose to pursue this activity in their own hometown. Skills learned on the climbing wall will give them confidence and greater success in rock and vertical wall climbing. The traverse wall gives our students another challenging opportunity to increase their skills and enhance their choices, furthering the rich depth of skill successes in A.P.E. class.



CONGRATULATIONS

2011

Graduates!!



LUCY

My experience at **CSB** was wonderful because I learned so much. I learned how to be

independent. From the very beginning, I felt like **CSB** was a fantastic school. My time here was great, especially when I went on trips to the movies, grocery stores, malls, out to lunch and to the Hub Gateway. Also, I liked going to the Fremont library.

My favorite part of **CSB** was Braille class, math and even going to break. Taking Braille class was fun. Braille helped me learn about information through reading. I liked math because it helped me to understand how to use money in certain ways. Like when I would go to the store, my money needed to be folded and I needed to think about what I would buy and if I would have enough money. Break time was my favorite because I got a chance to talk with friends and it was fun. I can just see myself, or dream of being here at **CSB** all the time.

The most important thing I've learned here at **CSB** was going out into the community safely and how to stay away from strangers. It was very important to learn because it helped me understand how to get help.

After I graduate, I will be spending my time at Sierra Day Program. At Sierra Day Program, I will be working on job skills. I would like to work at a worksite where I will be stocking supplies.

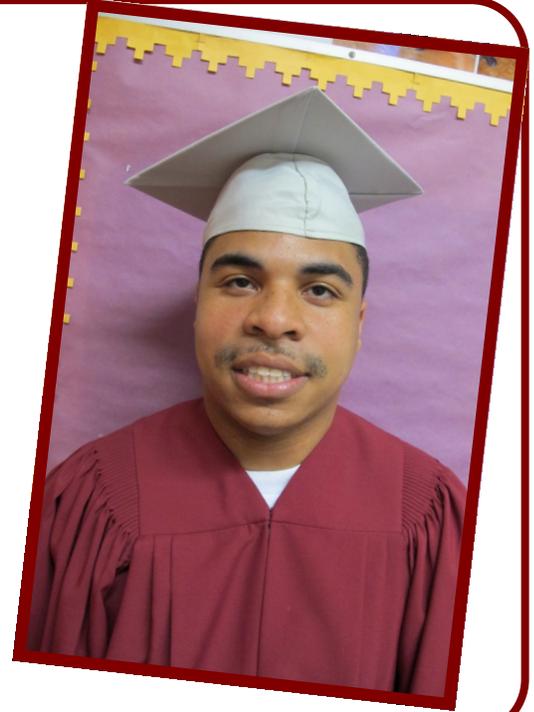
I am happy about graduation, but a little sad because I will miss all my teachers and friends. Although, I'll come back to visit.



Lavell

My experience at **CSB** has been really good. I learned working skills at the Rocket Shop and mobility skills in O&M class. I learned about staying healthy in A.P.E class. We used the fitness center and the swimming pool to stay in shape. I felt good about my report cards and working independently.

My time at **CSB** was wonderful. I learned about recycling papers, cans and bottles. I learned about computers and my IEP goals. I'm enrolled at the Hinton's Barber College. My responsibilities are cutting hair and model drills. My plans after graduation will be to find a job and research independent day programs.



Jonathan

My experiences have been fun and I have been a hard worker during my time at the **California School for the Blind**.

One of the most important skills that I have learned since coming here is Braille. This skill has helped me learn how to use the Braille Note for different assignments. It has also kept me focused on my goals even when my vision started to fade. Thanks to this skill I can read and write and it will help me organize my assignments in the future.

The other important skill that I have learned at the **California School for the Blind** is orientation and mobility. This skill has helped me travel safely in the community and it also has helped me locate important landmarks. I have also learned how to call Paratransit on the phone and arrange for trips out in the

community. I've been taught the basic skills of the Global positioning system, which helps me learn the distance and location of a store, building, or workplace

If it weren't for all of these skills that I have learned, I wouldn't be able to travel out in the community or attend the Orientation Center for the Blind. After I graduate CSB I will continue working on my skills at OCB and I will also continue working on my Hadley assignments so I can earn a diploma. I would like to thank all the teachers who have taught me during the years I have been attending **CSB**.



Chris

Chris is a very fun loving individual. He is very considerate of others feelings and has exceptionally good manners.

Chris was a very enthusiastic student at **CSB** and was also willing to try new things. He easily made friends with everybody.

Chris presently attends Castro Valley Adult School, Special needs division. He especially loves the flower arrangement class. Chris also attends Hope Day program for young adults with Special Needs.

Written by Ros Patton, Chris' teacher



Justin

I have been a student at **CSB** for 5 years. I have worked very hard here at **CSB**. I worked at Round Table Pizza folding pizza boxes. I have also worked in the Rocket Shop working on the cash register. I learned to cook microwave meals, such as Hot Pockets, spaghetti and meatballs, and orange chicken chow mein.

When I leave **CSB**, I might go to a group home in Roseville, CA.

I have good memories of **CSB**. I remember going to Target and buying a Taylor Swift CD with my teacher. I was bouncing off the walls over it! I also remember the time when I was in all of the concerts. I also remember when I wrote a song with Mr. Siligo titled "I Love To Use My Cane". I also remember when my mom would sit in the audience and be proud of me at the Spring Concert. I also remember when all the girls in the audience would chant with me.

I have learned a lot of things, and I really enjoyed my time at **CSB**.



Rebecca

I remember when I first came to **CSB**, I was nervous about whether or not I would like it. Luckily, everyone was friendly and helped me feel better. When I leave I'll miss the positive atmosphere and all my friends. I hope I'll be able to stay in touch with them when I leave.

I have a lot of fun memories such as getting my nails done for my last prom and then being crowned prom queen, getting into the apartment program, going to a corn maze, exploring the Winchester Mystery House, and going to San Francisco. When I leave **CSB**, I will be going to a school in Arizona. I would like to thank Dr. Wittenstein for teaching me how to use the abacus.



Emilio

I have been a student at **CSB** for eight years. During that time, I enjoyed going on field trips and living in the dorm. I really liked working in the art classes. My plan is to meet with my Regional center worker and look for employment. I am looking forward to leaving **CSB** and I will try to come back to visit.



Yosief

When I came to **CSB** in 2007, I wanted to learn how to travel independently and speak better English. I want to thank Nita Crow, my O&M teacher, for showing me many places and types of transportation. I also want to thank all of my teachers and dorm counselors for helping me learn things to help me live in America. I read about American history, practiced my English and went shopping at the mall. Some of my favorite experiences were working at Round Table Pizza, going on field trips to San Francisco with Ms. Quilici and walking on the treadmill in the **CSB** fitness center. I tried many new foods in restaurants and here at **CSB**. I am happy to start living and learning at the Orientation Center for the Blind after I leave **CSB**.



David

I have been at **CSB** for the past 5 years. While I was at **CSB**, I learned to use the computer with ZoomText and JAWS. I would get the latest scores and statistics for 49er games, as well as the Giants, Warriors, and Oakland A's. I was also an active member of the Gilly Club and I was an ambassador for the 150th anniversary celebration. When I leave **CSB**, I will live with my family in Lathrop and attend classes at the Stockton center for the Blind where I will continue computer instruction. I will miss **CSB**.



DJ

Although I have only been here for two years, I have learned so much. I have fond memories that I would like to share.

I will never forget **CSB**'s 150th Anniversary celebration. Everyone in my class wrote speeches on what **CSB** meant to them, and mine got picked. I read it aloud in front of the school and special guests.

Music has always been and will continue to be something I enjoy. I am a member of the **CSB** Jazz Ensemble. I play drums and occasionally sing lead vocals. I am also in the Glee Club. Being involved in these activities has been a real blessing to me, and I have also learned to embrace all different types of music.

CSB has their prom every year, and the students get to vote for prom king and queen. I was crowned prom king, and still have the crown to prove it. I never planned on being voted prom king, but it was great. When my name was called I was shocked! I guess the red shirt I was wearing was my lucky charm.

In closing, I think these memories will always have a place in my heart, and looking back now, I don't feel like I did when these things happened. I can say I've learned a valuable lesson from them. Get involved, make some friends, and have a laugh every now and then. It will keep you from thinking less about the bad things, and maybe someone else will be able to have some memories like mine, in the sense that they can relate to them. I would do it all over again if I could.



GOODBYE to CSB Staff

We will miss the following staff members who are retiring or moving on to newer things!

Gale Koliha - Student Assistant

Kathy Quilici - Teacher

Francey Liefert - Low Vision Specialist

Suzanne Shacoski - Psychologist

Joy Coe - Teacher

Ann Helen Leff - Reader



The Great Chocolate Chip Cookie Test

By: Cheryl Besden and Nita Crow

On Tuesday May 31 six students participated in the first ever chocolate chip cookie tasting event. Students worked individually or in pairs to travel by bus to different local bakeries to purchase chocolate chip cookies. They had to use previously learned skills or use large print or Braille instructions provided by the O&M department. Some students were supervised; others were independent in their travel. Given time constraints, O&M instructors transported the students back to school where all met in the O&M classroom. Plates were arranged with face-down bakery labels. Cookies were cut in quarters to ensure there were enough “tastes” for everyone (including instructors!) and students with vision were blindfolded. Five different cookies were sampled. Students and instructors were asked to use a rubric (this was an instructional activity after all!) to rate the cookies. Criteria considered were: number of chips, texture, taste and flavor or richness.



In case you want to know which cookies were sampled, they were from Peet’s Coffee, Panera, Mission Coffee, Starbuck’s and Amia Bakery. And the winner was Mission Coffee, with Starbuck’s close behind! Finally students compared the relative price and taste score to determine if the most expensive was really worth the price or if the least expensive actually tasted less desirable.

This was a fun way to use O&M, math and communication skills in a group setting. One of the students agreed to call Mission Coffee to tell them their cookies were voted to be the best of five contenders. We just don’t want APE to get wind of how many calories we consumed on that morning!

So You Think You Can Cook?

By: Staci Gonzales

CSB's student council held its' first annual, "So-you- think- you- can- cook?" culinary contest on March 8th. The dormitories were given the challenge to make a recipe that included one specific ingredient: lemons. The dorm students with their counselor's help, were to choose a recipe, make the recipe, which in turn, was presented to the judges.

The dorms really took to the challenge! Delectable dishes were made. Creative, original and flavorsome recipes were submitted, such as, lemon salsa, surprisingly delicious and unique. The Lemon butterballs a crunchy cookie, "perfect with a cup of tea or coffee", according to the judges. There were lemon & herb chicken wings cooked to a golden brown that were tender and very moist.

There were traditional recipes, like Lemon Bars, that the judges said had a perfect crust. The lemon cake was also a serious contender because of its perfect balance of tart and sweet. The judges, Delores Romero and Jolie Egusa (nurses in the student health unit), had great difficulty choosing just one recipe to be the overall winner. They insisted there be two categories, one for sweet and one for savory. The winners were: Nicholas, Dominic, Kiko, with their counselor Patrick for their original savory recipe of NDK steak. The steak was baked until tender using a lemon juice, beef broth, and yellow pepper as a marinade. Amy, Ashley and Jennifer along with their counselors, Edith and Minnie won the sweet category. The ladies of Northridge dorm used a recipe found in the **CSB** Cookbook for Quick Cherry Cheesecake. They improvised on the recipe and left out the cherry pie filling and added more real lemon juice.

All the winners received movie passes to a local theater to a movie of their choice. Residential students and staff were invited to come partake in the contest by purchasing a tasting plate of all the goodies for fifty cents. The funds raised went to student council to assist in their community service projects.



Special O&M trip

By: Alex Hernandez, student

The privilege that we got by going on this amazing trip was unforgettable for me. This privilege is not often given to many students around California schools. The thrill that the crowd projects throughout the stadium made my heart beat faster and faster. Women, men, kids and even babies were there to enjoy a great game.

On March 26 I woke up early, it was a rainy day, but the excitement rushed through my body. We had breakfast, drove to BART and took the train to the Oakland Coliseum. As soon as we got off the train the rush of people made their way up to the stadium. The people were eager to see the friendly match between the two participants of the 2010 World Cup, Mexico and Parawai. The many Mexican fans were curious to see the line up that the new Mexican coach Jose El Chepo de la Torre chose.

However, they were thrilled to see the Manchester United striker Javier el Chicharito Hernandez score in the first few minutes of the match. When Pablo Barrera put a perfect floater in the box for Hernandez to head it in the net. A few minutes after Jose Andres Guardado a midfielder for El Deportivo la Coruna scored again. Before the first half end Hernandez again scored, making the crowd go wild!

From this trip I also learned O&M skills. One of the biggest problems for me is getting around big crowds. Being surrounded by 48 thousand people is a big hassle. Especially when trying to exit the stadium. Having your cane helps because people can be aware of you.

In conclusion, this was an amazing trip that I would like to do again. This trip would have never happened without the support of staff like Ann Linville, Sharon Sacks, Marcia Vickroy and the approval of Stuart Wittenstein. Special appreciations to my O&M teach Marcia for giving up her own time to spend the weekend to go on this trip with us. I will keep this trip in my memory book and remember my good times at CSB.



2011 Prom

By LaWanda Vann

“Can we do it again next year?” seemed to be the consensus of the students who attended the prom this year.

The 2011 prom was held at the Los Gatos Opera House for the second year. It’s an elegant building and a big hit with the students and staff.

When the students were asked what they liked the most about the prom, the food, music and dancing received the most favorable responses. Although several students noted that there were too many fast songs and not enough slow ones. I’m pretty sure that tradition will remain the same.

DJ Horn and Rebecca Tracer were chosen by the students to be the king and queen.



WHY, YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT I DO: CHESS AND THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

By: Alysa Chadow

The motto of the United States Braille Chess Association (USBCA) is “Yes, blind people can and do play chess!” This is no idle boast; blind and visually impaired individuals, as well as the deaf-blind, have been playing chess since the 1950s. Our reasons for doing so are no different from those of our sighted counterparts, yet there exists as well a set of factors unique to our population.

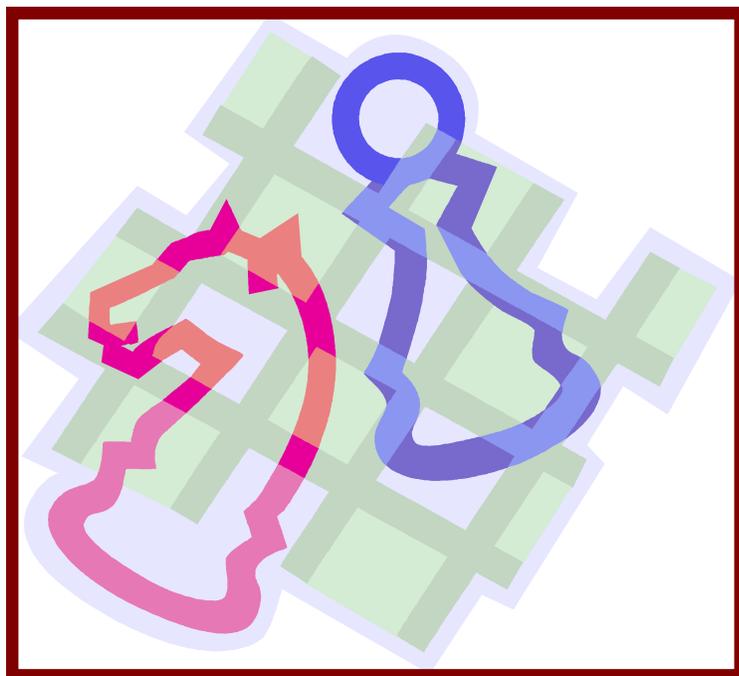
Chess helps strengthen O & M skills-The chess player is forced to see the world in terms of vertical and horizontal lines, as well as right angles, while seated at the chess board. Movements of pieces can easily be transferred to learning a route or even picking up a cane for the first time. Special relations increase significantly as well.

Social and Emotional Skills-Sportsmanship as well as the all-important turn-taking skills are strengthened through chess, as the player matures and comes to appreciate his or her opponent’s abilities as well as his or her own.

CRITICAL THINKING There is no way that this skill will not be acquired through the playing of chess. Students of the game learn about thinking ahead and decision making, skills that they will need for the rest of their lives.

RECREATION AND LIESURE-Chess is an inexpensive and highly enjoyable form of entertainment for both blind and sighted people alike. The board is easy to set up, and accessible sets are available from a variety of places both in the United States and abroad.

Interested in learning more? It’s your move!



If you would like to contribute a future article for Braille Bites, please send it to: jrudder@csb-cde.ca.gov