



CSB Braille Bites

Special
Graduation
Issue!

California State Special Schools

June 2010



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Superintendent's Message

By Stuart Wittenstein

"Children are messages we send to a time we will never see." -Neil Postman

We are still enjoying the warm glow of celebrating our 150th anniversary as a school with friends and families – old and new. The celebration became a reunion with former students and staff returning to CSB from all over the United States – renewing friendships with hugs and tears and storytelling. The warmth and caring of that day carries us forward as we work with our current student body to prepare them for their futures. We hope they will return for the 175th or 200th anniversary and find one another and check out what they left behind in our time capsule.

As we close our 150th school year at the California School for the Blind, I appreciate now more than ever what a team effort it is to do our best



to serve our students – families, faculty, staff, blind and sighted advisors, decision makers, legislators, Department of Education officials, supporters, sponsors, researchers and university professors, and of course the students themselves, all come together to make CSB the very special place it is to live and learn and work.

I remember the words of Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Lemon, "I've come to the conclusion that the two most important things in life are good friends and a good bullpen."

CSB is very lucky to have all of that and more.

Congratulations Graduates!!!!!!



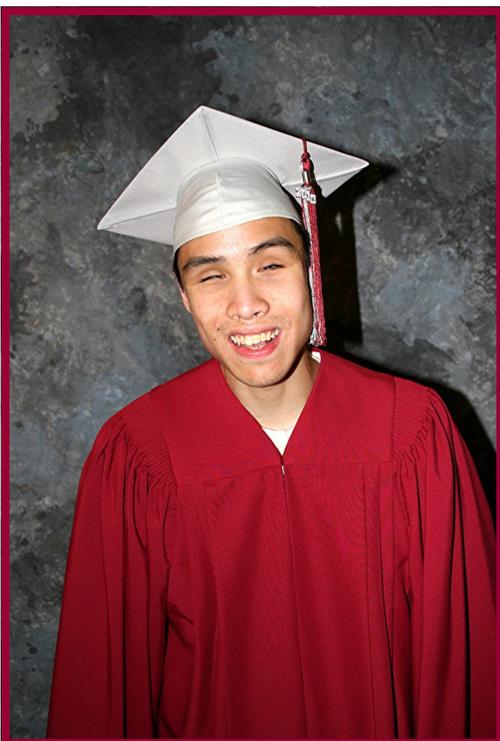
My name is **Mark Rodriguez**, I've been at CSB for over 10 years. I've had fun at CSB, including the different events the staff put on like the concert, dances, field trips and other similar events. The staff at CSB are hard-working people. I've had some memorable experiences at CSB, including winning the Braille Bee and gaining more traveling independence through mobility lessons. My daily living skills and my technology and Braille skills have also improved thanks to CSB. I will miss CSB and will come back often.



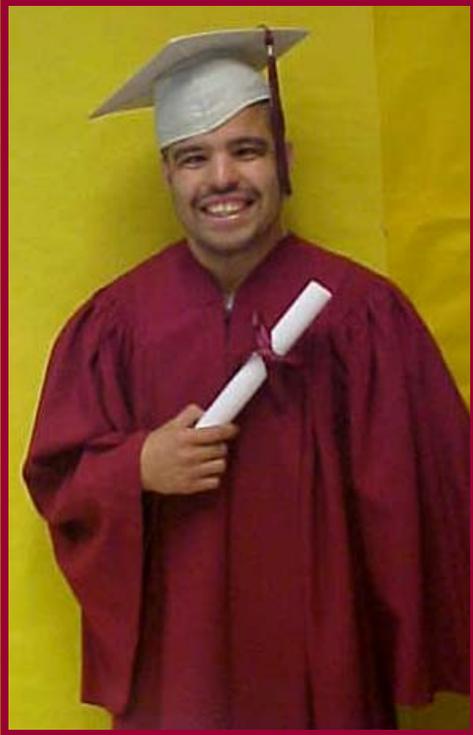
My name is **Monique Alviso** and I've been attending CSB for 8 years. When I first started, I was very homesick, until my dorm counselor showed me how to navigate around my new home away from home. I will always remember how welcome that made me feel. My favorite activities at school are art, music and cooking.. I play the piano every week, and I also play percussion instruments in the Jazz Ensemble. In the past I have played the keyboard in the Mission Ensemble. I have enjoyed being in the choir and all of the songs that I learned to sing. I really enjoy the opportunities that I have been given as a result of being in the music program here. I have traveled to Sacramento to perform for the Department of Educations Holiday party. I played at the ground breaking ceremony at the Fremont Bart Station for the new Warm Springs extension. I will miss all the field trips, the dances, and the gigs that I have played and the teachers at CSB. After graduation I would like to continue my education in bible studies.



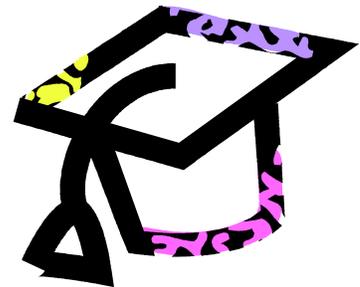
My name is **Markus Choo**. In the 9 years I was at CSB, I have been learning different things. One of the things I accomplished is my mobility skills. When I first arrived at CSB, I did not know any of my routes. I have also accomplished becoming a very good key board player. Also, when I came to CSB, I was very shy. I learned to talk to people more. I have met lots of friends and staff. Now I enjoy socializing with other people. I also learned how to cook different meals in the apartment with my class and in the dorm. I also learned how to make beds and have good personal hygiene. In class I learned a lot of my money skills and personal information. I have gone off campus to work at different job sites, my first job was to put the weekly calendar in staff mailboxes. After I leave CSB, I would like to live in the bay area, and take classes during the day. I will really miss CSB when I leave.



My name is **James Lee** and I have been a student at the California School for the Blind for ten years. I am happy that I came to CSB. I like riding the bus every week. When I first started coming here I was homesick. After I got used to being here I made new friend. I like to hang out with my roommate and listen to music after school. One of my favorite activities was gardening with Mrs. Willows and Ms. Johnsen. I also like the jobs off campus like wiping tables and folding pizza boxes. My favorite thing at school was going shopping with my class. I will miss the counselors, teachers and friends. After graduation I will live at home with my family and go to work at the Regional Center.



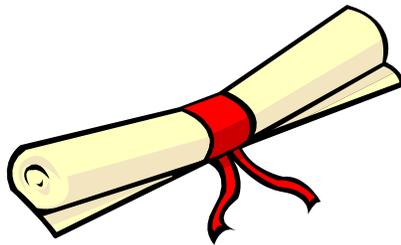
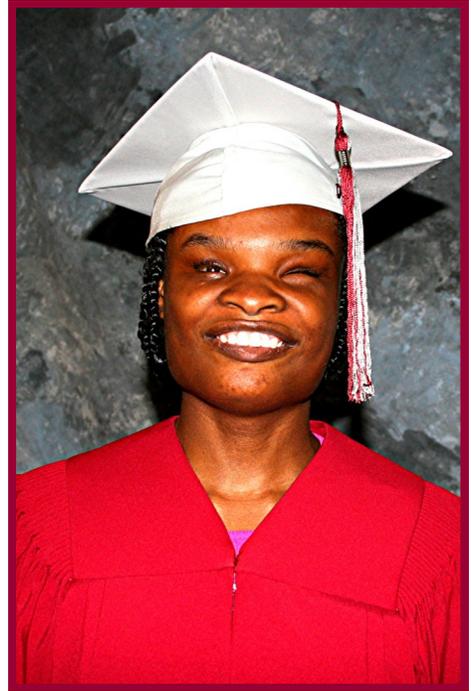
My name is **Jorge Navarro** and I have been a student at the California School for the Blind for seven years. I have a lot of good memories about my participation in the music program with Mr. Siligo. I played the drums in the Jazz Ensemble. Mr. Siligo my music teacher has taught me a lot about the drums. I have traveled with the group all over the bay area and to Sacramento to play at gigs with Mr. Siligo and the rest of the Ensemble. My favorite activities at school are: fitness, the walking club, and swimming. I will miss going off campus with my dorm counselors and with my teachers. After graduation, I'm moving to L.A. and looking for a job in construction. I will remember all of the staff who we're so nice to me while I attended school here.



My name is **Michelle Hurdt**, I have been at CSB since 2004. It was a wonderful 7 years here. I have learned many things at CSB. I have improved on my math and money skills. Before I came to CSB I just gave the bills to the clerk and waited for her to give me the change. I learned to count twenty dollar bills up to one hundred dollars and how to handle my money. I used a BrailleN-Speak for five years until it stopped working on me. That's when I started to learn the BrailleNote with Ann Gelles. Those are two examples of the many things I have learned at CSB. I plan to continue to live in Fremont and go to adult School. I also plan to go to Creative Growth in Oakland. At Creative Growth, you get to make are anyway you like, and you get to sell your art in the gallery. I would like to give thanks for everyone for supporting me when I was at CSB.



My name is **Leonna Tucker** and I have attended the California School for the Blind for seven years. When I first came to CSB I didn't think I would like it. Then the O&M teacher showed me how to find my way around and I made a lot of friends. Now I am going to miss everyone at CSB. My favorite things to do are: shopping, going to Sonic and going to Mountain Mike's to get some job experience. While I was a student here I participated in the Glee Club for 4 years, Student Council, and Scouts. I also enjoyed spending time with Gilly, a retired guide dog who is our resident mascot. After graduation I will be moving to a group home. I will miss CSB, it will always be special to me.



My name is **William Hansen**, I have had many wonderful experiences here at CSB. One of the best experiences that I had was being in the Jazz Band. We went to lots of gigs and had a lot of fun.

In my third year at CSB, I started going to Ohlone College. I have been going there for 2 years. I have taken music, fitness and broadcasting classes. Overall I have had lots of great experiences at CSB and I hope that what I have learned will be with me for the rest of my future.





Welcome to the year of 2010 senior class for I am graduating this year. My name is Alloura Berard, I have been here for a while. The experiences that are worth a lifetime. I have learned a lot this year, for example I learned how to use the Braille Note, GPS, abacus and to go out into the community comfortably with my cane. I also live in the Living Skills/ Apartment living program. I have learned the concepts of living in an apartment and the responsibilities that come with living in your own apartment. I attend Ohlone College and have managed my time with what I do during the school week. I have a lot of good experiences by coming to CSB.

My name is Angela Vasquez, and I live in Madera, California which is in the Central Valley. Let me tell you about my experiences at CSB. I became a formal student at CSB in February 2003. Before attending CSB I never crossed a street, went shopping by myself or used public transportation. Now, I use Amtrak, AC Transit, and BART to get around the Bay Area and the Central Valley. I lived in the dorms for several years until I applied for the Apartment Living Program. It is a great program because it gives blind and visually impaired students the opportunity to become more independent. We have to find a recipe, make a shopping list, go to the store and cook once a week.

Also, one of my best experiences was joining the advanced O&M class. I learned how to travel to different cities by public transportation. I went to San Francisco, Madera and Richmond among other cities. But I think one of the best trips was going to Yosemite National Park because it was a different environment and an unusual place. From Fremont to Yosemite on public transportation, it took is 14 hours round trip because we had to transfer from Amtrak to a bus. We stayed there for 2 days, and I learned about the mountains and animals that live in the area.

Even though, I live away from my family for several months of the year; I think it was worth it because I gained lots of great experiences and great memories. After CSB I'm transferring to Fresno City College to finish my Spanish and English translation degree. When I go to Fresno, I'll use lots of public transportation to get around; therefore, I will incorporate all the skills that I learned at CSB.



The Magic Thrives

By: Wayne Siligo

Near the end of summer of 1980 I came to CSB to visit the new campus on Walnut Avenue in Fremont. I had visited the Berkeley campus a few times in the past to attend music recitals and concerts.

That afternoon in Fremont I was greeted at the administration building by Robert McMullin who to this day would be addressed as “Mac, or Mr. Mac.” He was acting superintendent at the time and was warm and proud of the new campus. The following forty minutes or so were something special, --no, they were awesome! He took me on a tour of the new facility, showing me the dorms, apartments, and of course our special gym, pool and wonderful classrooms. I was amazed at the fine acoustics of the theater and music building and marveled at the sturdy construction of the library and larger workshops. Though I knew it would pose some new challenges to the blind students soon to travel its sidewalks, I found the layout of the campus unique and intriguing.

We finished our tour and ended our conversation standing in the center of the Town Square. As a gentle and unusually warm wind clanked the cable on the flagpole and blew through the quad, we discussed CSB’s need for a new part-time teacher.

As Mr. Mac talked and I smelled the grass and paint of the new buildings float through the quad, I remember being enveloped by a feeling of awe and mystery. I realized it was a feeling of being somewhere very special and wanting so much to be a part of whatever magic was brewing in the buildings and grounds around me.

I began teaching at CSB just a few months later and for so many years now, I have been privileged to watch that magic grow and work its changes on the lives of so many special people.

Here on the year of our 150th anniversary, the awe remains, and the magic thrives.

Parent Orientation Day will be Monday, August 30th

This is a reminder that parents **must** accompany their students when they return to school on August 30, 2010. Please plan on arriving at 9:30 a.m. Speakers will start in the theater at 10:00 a.m. and visits to the classrooms at 11:00 a.m.

The registration, transportations and health services stations will be open to collect your forms beginning at 11:30 a.m. and the dormitories will open at 1:30 for student who stay during the week. Parents will have time to see their child’s room and unpack.

Look for additional information to be mailed in July.

CSB's 150th Anniversary Celebrated in Grand Style

By: Sharon Sacks

CSB students, staff, families, alumni, & friends celebrated its 150th anniversary with great pride and excitement. Over 300 guests attended the celebratory events on Thursday, May 13, 2010. Keynote speaker, Dr. Phil Hatlen eloquently spoke about the history of the school and some of its leaders and teachers. Entertainer and writer, Tom Sullivan, wowed the audience as he shared his life experiences through music and song. A panel of CSB alums and present students described how our specialized school changed and influenced their lives.



The beauty of the CSB grounds shined as guests enjoyed an outdoor reception, and a sumptuous banquet in the school's gym. Thanks to parent and caterer, Maureen De Long, who graciously provided her services to our school. After a wonderfully prepared meal CSB received accolades from local legislators and representatives from the Department of Education.



After dinner, guests enjoyed the school's art show and Spring Concert. Students performed original music composed and orchestrated by our music teacher, Wayne Siligo and his assistant Charles Lloyd. Following the concert, students, families, and guests were treated to a dessert extravaganza sponsored by CSB teachers and staff. What an amazing dessert buffet! Thanks to all who contributed. A special

thank you goes to Cheryl Besden, Barbara Maher, and Christina Schmoyer who coordinated our dessert reception.

The glow of the day's events remain with us as we complete another school year. Our 150th Anniversary Celebration would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors. I want to personally thank those who contributed to make this day a special one for all who support the California School for the Blind. We thank you! As a result of your generosity we have the seed money to begin a CSB Education Foundation.



CSB Land Honored

By: Sharon Sacks

On Wednesday, May 12, 2010 CSB students and staff began their 150th anniversary celebration with a "Smudging Ceremony". The son of the Ohlone Indian Chief led the CSB community in a traditional Indian blessing of the land. The land on which the CSB campus resides was once Ohlone sacred land. Students and staff listened to stories, and chanted a tribal blessing to honor the history of the Ohlone people.



Later in the day students were invited to view the school's Spring art show, and matinee Spring concert. Then, students dined on a special dinner prepared for them by Maureen De Long and her staff. Thank you to Gayalene Buck and the CSB kitchen staff for their help.

Did you know CSB has a Student Council?

By: Staci Gonzales

Did you know CSB has a student council? The student council has 25 members, 4 of which hold office. There are also 6 counselors that give assistance in the after school activity. The student council meets bi-weekly on Tuesdays in the Recreation Center. This school year the emphasis of the council has been on community service, not just locally but globally as well. The students have given their time and made blankets for a local animal sanctuary located in the central valley. Further abroad the council donated \$300 to the Philippines to help families of blind and visually impaired youngsters recover after the devastating floods that occurred in September 2009. And recently, the student council has raised over \$320 for a school that serves the blind, visually impaired and deaf students in Haiti. The school was devastated by the recent earthquake. Money was raised a variety of ways: by selling homemade treats through the generous help of the Rocket Shop; an afterschool bake sale and cake walk; and ongoing recycling of used computer inkjets and toner cartridges. The student council is on a continuous quest to support and improve the planet on which we live.



NASA visits CSB!



Assistive Technology

By: Cindy Green

This year in the AT lab, there are many fun and interesting things to learn. The staff is experimenting with new classes, as well as bringing back popular classes, enabling students to expand their knowledge, as well as their interests.

The “On-line Fashion Magazine” class, which is new this spring, has been fun for both students and teachers. Articles will include insight into CSB Fashion, evening wear, and camping fashion to name a few. Students are exploring web sites, interviewing staff and other students, and even smelling perfumes at retail department stores, in an effort to create an accessible on-line publication. The goal is to also make it available in large print and Braille.

Students in our most popular class, “Film and Photography,” are working with both digital cameras and camcorders. In learning to use the equipment, students have taken pictures of everything, from thumbs (in front of the lens) to CSB’s flora and fauna. It’s occasionally



frustrating, with a bunch of fun thrown in, but it always ends in success.

The “Assistive Technology” class has been discovering equipment for their own needs, as well as other’s. Students have learned how to scan documents then access them for editing. They have also discovered hand-held recorders and have

experimented with manipulating and saving appropriate settings for their particular screen access software.

The Leadership class is holding an accessible Games Tournament. The

competition is open to staff and students, and everyone walks away with a prize. (Thank you PFA!)

Students are continuing to progress in using the BrailleNote to access the Internet, creating and printing documents, and reading audio and Braille books.

Each class, whether held inside or outside of the lab, is different, informative and quite interesting.

See you in the lab!

Jim, Jerry, Adrian and Cindy

How It Came To Be

During the last ten years I've written several skits and plays for my class to perform here at CSB. Penning a school-wide play for the 150th anniversary of our school's founding was only natural.

I based the play on the booklet Lynn Laird had prepared for CSB's 125th anniversary. My work was a living time line which began with the school's founding on Tehama Street in San Francisco and finished up with a cabinet meeting with some of our school administrators, who, interestingly enough, were planning a birthday celebration for one of CSB's most distinguished alumnus.

In between were scenes depicting key events in CSB's life, including the San Francisco earthquake and two legislative votes on the changing of its name and the separating of the blind and deaf students. Yes, I've snuck in a bit of humor here and there—after all, you don't turn 150 every day.

The most important aspect of putting on a play is the many skills the students will gain from being in it. Acting on stage is full of learning how to take turns, work cooperatively, and even problem solve. Oh, yes...the kids get to be someone else for a while, too.

What also had to be taken into account were the actors' individual needs. To that end, I designed and implemented what I call a staging format. This format consisted of a list of each of the nine scenes, with within which was further listed the actors in the order they spoke. The two lists correlated with the play's script, the only difference being that the scenes in the staging format were assigned numbers, and

By: Alysa Chadow

the actors' real names were used as well. This was to avoid confusion for the prompters, who obviously identified the students by their actual names, not their stage ones.

The prompters were another and equally important part of our play. The 3 who were in place for the performance were there in order to assist students who forgot their lines or simply froze with fear. One of the best parts of the play (in addition to the acting, of course) was the seamless team work between actors and prompters. The latter would whisper their lines, and they would respond almost immediately. It made our time on stage all that more meaningful.

This anniversary present to CSB was also a graduation one. A couple of the actors will in fact be graduating next month, and it was important to me to see them have at least one more positive experience-and happy memory—before leaving CSB.

My heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to all of you who helped out with the putting on of this play—teachers, counselors, staff, and, especially—the actors themselves. I'm so pleased to know that all who viewed HOW IT CAME TO



BE had such a great time. I know that I certainly did!

Poetry

On April 26th, 2010, “the dorms had a poet Dana Lomax come in and work with the students writing poems.” She went to all three dorms and every student in the residential program wrote a poem. These are some examples of the students work.

My Life, by Nicholas Pratt

Keyboard can you hear me! I make lots and lots of noise
 I am moving, I wake myself up, the sun is shining like a star.
 I am happy. I like to listen to music.
 I am yellow. It is the color of butter and yolk.
 I am Bugs Bunny and I say What’s Up Doc?
 I am human. I like to tell jokes. I like to play keyboard



Who I am, by Brian Pilat

I am Vegas with all the cards being dealt
 I am a drum set never being in the same place for too long
 I am dawn rising everyday as if it were meant to be
 The smell of coffee, the birds chirping
 That is me

The Life of Noralys Chavez, by Noralys Chavez

I am London with its magnificent places people tend to enjoy
 I am a piano when I hear soothing music played upon my ear
 I am morning when it comes to my education
 I am as happy as a young lady should be when she finds love
 I am the color yellow because I tend to shine unknown worlds
 I am he Devon because I sometimes keep secrets from people
 I am a sweetheart when it comes to spending time with people I know and Love

APE at CSB

By: Mary Alice Ross and Sue Swigart

Adapted Physical Education at the California School for the Blind is conducted in the community setting for the transition students (ages 16- 21).

This program is divided into different units and over the years, the students have participated in different activities such as: boating, bowling, hiking, outdoor education, swimming at local lakes, ice-skating, horse back riding, rock climbing, yoga, miniature golf, and fencing among other physical activities.

The boating program has been conducted at different East Bay Regional parks and includes canoes, kayaks, row boats and pedal boats. The students learn how to paddle, how to safely get into and out of the different boats and how to maneuver on the floating docks which can be tippy to walk on. Prior to boating on a lake, the students learn the basics in the CSB pool. We have a kayak that the students learn to paddle and this is a great way to introduce the boating unit.

Ice skating is taught at a rink in Dublin and the students are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Some students use an ice skating aid (looks like a walker) while others use their cane and/or hold onto the wall if needed. The students learn to safely get up if they fall, they learn to stop and they learn proper technique for safely skating with other people on the ice. O&M skills become a major factor when ice-skating. The students learn skating skills as well as safely maneuvering around the rink.



Hiking is conducted at local East Bay Regional Parks. Some hikes are easy and some are challenging with difficult terrain and steep hills. The students like the challenge at one local park that has “cardiac hill” which is a short but difficult ascent. The students learn about hills, valleys, ravines, ridges, depressions and other geographic terminology. Hiking also challenges the students to use different techniques with their canes.

Outdoor education is conducted at different parks in the area and has included: setting up tents, sleeping bags, cooking equipment and learning about different natural environment conditions. The students have even tried their luck at fishing at local lakes.

Rock climbing is taught at an indoor rock climbing wall. The students learned to pull their own body weight up the wall and learned about safety ropes “belay” and how to descend the wall safely. This is a very challenging activity for some of the students. The students learn about laterality/directionality and how to position their hands/legs using the face of a clock as the verbal cues. For example, “place your right hand at 3 o’clock and move your left foot up to 7 o’clock”.

Horse back riding was conducted at a local stable. The students learned to groom the horses and how to feed them. In addition, they learned to safely climb onto a horse and to ride in an indoor setting, before heading out onto some trails. Unfortunately, the funding for this program was cut and the stables closed.

Fremont (where the California School for the Blind is located) has an organization called “Fremont Fencers”. They are a local sports club that competes in fencing competitions. For a couple of years, the students learned the basics of fencing. It was fun to see the students put on the many layers of fencing equipment and learn the moves with the swords. Although the students do not participate in this program any more, it was a wonderful opportunity for them.

Bowling is a favorite of the students and one that they can enjoy at home on the weekends with their family. In addition to learning the proper arm swing, aim, and release of the ball, the students learn orientation to the lanes and how to choose a proper ball. They are very motivated to achieve strikes and spares.

The students had the opportunity to learn Hatha Yoga from a Master teacher. This was a wonderful class and the students learned about deep breathing, stretching and relaxation techniques. It was a great stress reduction and fun activity.

There are many other physical activities and team sports conducted at the California School for the Blind. To name a few: beep baseball, goalball, in-line skating, roller skating, swimming, gymnastics, tandem bike riding, and using the fitness center.

The Physical Education Content Standards for California Public Schools are used to teach skills and measure progress. The three main areas covered are: movement skills, physical fitness, and psychological and sociological concepts. The Adapted P.E. program uses the activities described above to address these standards.



Did you know that CSB is on Facebook? You can find us here:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/California-School-for-the-Blind/196621861573>

Become a fan of our page and get weekly updates on what is going on at our school.

Check it out!

Short Courses return for next year!!

By: Barbara Maher

Schedule of Upcoming Short Course Sessions for School Year 2010-2011

Students arrive at CSB on Sunday evening, the night before the Short Course session begins. Dates listed are actual dates of classes. Please note that some weeks are not five days and students may come to CSB on Monday evening or leave on Thursday to go home.

Transportation is provided by CSB to and from campus at no cost to district or family.

September 13-17, 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 and assignments from their home schools.

Deadline for application is September 3, 2010.

September 27-October 1, 2010 - Environmental Education Week Activities include a day at the Monterey Bay Aquarium with a set time for admittance into the lab for hands on exploration. This is followed by lunch with a PhD student at Hopkins Marine Station. The week also includes a kayak trip lead by ETC in the Elkhorn Slough, and a community service project in the Monterey Bay Regional Park District. If there is time, we will go to Point Lobos for a hike and some exploration. Students will stay in the Monterey Hostel which is within walking distance of the aquarium. This course is for middle school students.

Deadline for application is September 10, 2010

October 11-14, 2010 - Tactile Graphics Week. A week exploring 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.

Please note this is a 4 day week for CSB. Students will go home on Thursday.

October 25-29, 2010 – Boats, Trains and Buses! Transportation week. Introduction to a variety of modes of transportation available in the Bay Area including CalTrain, BART, Cable Car, bus travel, and a ferry ride. We might even be able to squeeze in a visit to the beach. Geared towards students ages 7-10.

For more information regarding the Short Course programs, please contact:

Barbara Maher: bmaher@csb-cde.ca.gov or 510-794-3800 x.272

Sharon Sacks: ssaks@csb-cde.ca.gov or 510-794-3800 x.313