Goalball Rules!!!

Ta’Lia Woodard shows great form and is one of TSBVI’s best players.

2016-17 was TSBVI’s most successful goalball year ever!

We are delighted to announce that three of TSBVI’s All-American players - TaLia Woodard, Demetria Ober and Davieon Perez - have made the USABA Youth Paralympics Goalball team. This summer, these students will have the honor to play in the (Adult) National Championships in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and in the World Games in Hungary.

Goalball is an exciting, fast-paced team sport played by athletes who are blind or visually impaired. All players must wear opaque eyeshades while playing to...
School-Year Program

Goalball Rules!!!  continued from page 1

ensure fair competition on a level playing field. The sport was invented in 1946 by World War II veterans who had lost their sight but still wanted to participate in an exciting sport when they returned home. Three players of a six-member team play at a time on an 18-meter by 9-meter court (approximately 59 feet by 29.5 feet) with the objective to throw a ball into the net to score. The ball has bells inside and no talking is allowed so the players can hear the location of the ball at all times.

TSBVI students love to play goalball, and practice once or twice a week. The recreation building on campus has a dedicated goalball court and students can also play in the gymnasium. These facilities make it possible for TSBVI to host the Lone Star Classic goalball tournament in October of each year. The school will also host the Youth National Goalball Championship Tournament on alternate years. With dedicated coaches Mark Gronquist, Tammy Reed and Bryan Maffett and a world-class facility, it is no wonder that at TSBVI, GOALBALL RULES!

In 2015 three University of Texas football players scrimmaged with the TSBVI team. The Longhorns were powerful on offense, but were no match for the TSBVI wildcats.

At the Lone Star Classic Tournament at TSBVI, seven advanced teams competed in the tournament. Three of the favored teams - Lakeshore, San Antonio, and of course, the TSBVI Texas Team - all came to play ball and did not disappoint! In the Lone Star Classic finals, Texas girls cruised in for the win! On the boys' side, the Texas boys played San Antonio in the finals. The games resulted in a 13 to 3 score with the Texas boys running away with the championship.

An adult tournament took place at the Northeast Regional Tournament in Westmont, New Jersey, in which five students from TSBVI's goalball team competed. This tournament is one of only a few tournaments to qualify players for eligibility in both the National Champion-

Coach Mark Gronquist, Davion Perez, Jordan Main, Ricky Castaneda, Hector Lara and Coach Tammy Reed
ships (adult) and the World Youth Games this summer in Budapest, Hungary. TSBVI student players competing in the tournament included Davion Perez, Jordan Main, Hector Lara, Ricky Castaneda, Ta’lia Woodard. Ta’lia went as a pool player and played with the New Jersey Honeybees women’s team. Ta’lia and the Honeybees took the bronze medal, qualifying Ta’lia to play in the summer games!

The TSBVI boys team came into the tournament as an unknown, overlooked by the adult goalball teams. But the TSBVI boys’ team shocked their division, going undefeated into the Medal Rounds. TSBVI boys’ team competed in the gold medal game against the New Jersey Titans. The Wildcat boys had played the Titans earlier in the tournament, winning the game 9 to 8. In the gold-medal game, the Titans had revenge on their mind, and at halftime, the Titans led 5 to 2. In the second half, the Wildcats took over the game and won the gold medal, clinching the win with a final score of 9 to 6.

At the Youth National Goalball Championships, TSBVI’s boys’ and girls’ goalball teams competed along with 13 other goalball teams in St. Augustine, Florida. Both the TSBVI boys’ and the girls’ teams advanced to the final day and into the semi-finals and medal rounds. The girls’ team first semi-final game was with Utah. The TSBVI girls showed excellent teamwork and defense, and beat Utah 5 to 0, advancing to the gold medal game to face Florida. The TSBVI girls’ jumped out to an early 4-1 lead, but the champion Florida team fought back, making the right adjustments and winning the championship medal 5 to 8. The TSBVI girls’ won the silver medal - the best finish in TSBVI school history.

The TSBVI Boys’ Team played into the semi-finals and medal rounds, as well. In the semi-finals, the TSBVI boys’ team met up with the
School-Year Program

Goalball Rules!!! *Cont’d from page 3*

goalball powerhouse team from Utah, a rematch from 2015. The game was a back-and-forth defense with TSBVI outlasting Utah 6 to 5, advancing to the gold medal game.

The TSBVI boys' team met up in the gold medal game against Virginia. The TSBVI team gave it their best effort to the end, but the Virginia offense was vigorous, and Virginia won the gold. However, the TSBVI boys' team won the silver medal for the second time in two years at the High School National Championships. TSBVI teams received additional honors when the girls' team was awarded the sportsmanship award, and for the first time in TSBVI history, four players - Demetria Ober, Ta’Lia Woodard, Davieon Perez and Jordan Main (a Round Rock ISD student who plays with the TSBVI team) were named to the All-American Team.

**Way to go WILDCATS! Thanks for a great year!** - Coaches Mark Gronquist, Tammy Reed & Bryan Maffett

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**Student Council News** by Belinda Rosas

The 2016-2017 Student Council was a hard-working team that dedicated many hours to their projects. Their first activity of the year was to prepare and serve the refreshments for the school’s Red Ribbon Week celebration. The council members all participated in painting the TSBVI go-cart track, refurbishing the playhouse and purchasing new toys for it. The Council successfully advocated for installation of a fence for the TSBVI outdoor basketball court.

Giving back to the community is an important part of the Student Council’s yearly activities. During the fall semester, we hosted a Winter Wishes fundraiser to raise donations to send canes to kids in Haiti. In the spring semester, the students bought food and snacks to make sandwiches that were distributed among Austin’s homeless community. The Student Council produced its annual school-wide talent show. We want to thank all of the parents, students and staff who came to watch the show. Our TSBVI students really do have a lot of talent! And to end the school year on a celebratory note, the Council sponsored an ice cream social. This group was full of energy and ideas for serving our student body and the community.
White Cane Day is observed all over the United States each October, and Austin’s event is the largest. TSBVI students and staff participate in the yearly celebration of this day, along with students from local districts, members of the Lions Clubs, DARS, Travis Association for the Blind and many other groups and organizations.

Due to the unavailability of downtown locations, this year’s White Cane Day was held on the TSBVI campus. Instead of marching down Congress Avenue to City Hall as usual, students found other ways to use their orientation and mobility skills by taking the city bus, then marching through the surrounding neighborhoods back to campus.

Following the march, over 850 attendees came to TSBVI for a day of celebrating, eating a BBQ lunch and having a great time. Volunteers from Lions Clubs, Delta Gamma Sorority, and other groups provided activities that included face painting, a fire engine, Bonzo Crunch the clown, a climbing wall, a military HUMVEE, vision assessments, bounce houses and a giant blow-up hamster ball. Spectrum News reporters covered the event with an on-air story.

The other **big event** on campus was Parent Weekend, held on November 10-11. Families traveled from all over the state to meet with their student’s teachers, meet each other, learn about important issues, practice O&M skills and have a great time at the Saturday carnival. There was a welcome and a student performance to kick things off, and parent-teacher meetings all morning. Along with a picnic lunch on the grounds, dozens of carnival-type activities filled the afternoon. The day ended with a spirited pep rally that included a wrestling demonstration, cheerleaders performing their championship routine, and dancing in the gym.

The staff of TSBVI is always thrilled that so many families come to Austin to share this weekend and make the **big event** so successful.
Wildcats Show Their Creativity and Talent in the Drama and Art Programs

Drama students performed in two amazing and well-received plays in the 2016-17 school year. In December, they presented a one-act comedy, “Small Actors” by Stephen Gregg. The main character tells her parents she is starring in Romeo & Juliet when she only has a small part. This story teaches us about the roles we play in theater and in life.

The year ended on a high note with the performance of “Shrek the Musical Jr.” The 32-member cast included all of your favorite fairy tale characters as well as a love story between Shrek and Princess Fiona. Devin Gutierrez as Shrek and Ta’Lia Woodard as Donkey kept the audience laughing. Both productions were audio described by Tammy Reed.

Talent and imagination were on display on a beautiful Saturday in May in the Fine Arts Building. For the first time, artwork by TSBVI students were included in a city-wide exhibition, the West Austin Studio Tour. Titled, “I Can’t Hear You, It’s Too Dark in Here,” the exhibit showcased a variety of styles of student art.

Art teacher, Gretchen Bettes wrote, “I will have each student discuss their inspiration, what they gain from the self expression of art, their process, how making art makes them feel and so forth. I want them to learn how to discuss their art, their unique perspective, and to speak to the public about it. The theme of the show is to educate the community about our population and their abilities. Our multimedia artwork reflects our experiences in the world as curious, expressive human beings who desire open communication with those around us.”
School-Year Program

A “Starry Night” Prom Is Visited From a Galaxy Far Away!

Prom is the social highlight of the year, and the 2017 prom theme of “A Starry Night” was enhanced by the visit of six costumed Star Wars characters, including a Trooper who is blind. These galactic visitors joined in the fun, dancing with students, posing for pictures, and even letting students feel what a Storm Trooper’s uniform and helmet are really like.

TSBVI’s prom consists of dinner, dancing, a disc jockey, coronations of kings and queens, souvenir photos, and elegantly-dressed students who barely resemble their casual selves. Short-Term Program High School Independence Weekend brings a large group of short-term program students to TSBVI, to make this “THE Texas VI prom,” according to Superintendent Bill Daugherty, who is always in attendance.
School-Year Program

Recreational Sports Offered in 2016-17 by Joe Paschall, PE Teacher

As an athlete who is visually impaired, I wanted all students with visual impairments, not just elite athletes, to have exposure to sports. In my own experiences with football and track in school, I was able to participate but never got to handle the ball. In college I decided to major in Physical Education and also joined the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA). This led to many sports adventures that included cycling across Russia on a tandem bicycle. I also competed in snow skiing, goal ball, track and field, swimming, marathons and triathlons, and scuba diving. From 2011-2013 I did an Ironman Triathlon, The Boston Marathon, and a Paralympics Triathlon.

I learned that training and competing brings about a self-discipline that enhances self-esteem. Since this worked for me, I thought it would also work for our students. This school year we have offered blind tennis, swimming, golf, and triathlon teams to our students. These student athletes often came to practice at 6:30 AM for weeks at time. In the fall, the tennis team traveled to Laredo for an International Tournament with Mexico. The swim team had a swim meet with a local school of sighted peers and did quite well.

The golf team visited a local golf course to play. In April, 10 students with guides completed the Capitol 10-K (6.03 miles) race with 30,000 other runners. We also held a triathlon on campus where 12 students competed in swimming, tandem cycling, and running.

These activities encompass so much more than competition. They enhance self-esteem through peer interaction and encouragement from one another, pride in appearance, and rewards with celebrations after each event. It gave me great pleasure to have TSBVI’s support to provide these experiences for our students and observe the benefits of recreational sports.
School-Year Program

South Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) Tournaments

TSBVI students participate in many competitive sports during the year. It is an opportunity to push yourself to do your best. Each year, students compete against students from five other schools in the SCASB conference, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma, twice a year at one of the school campuses.

In January wrestlers and cheerleaders had a terrific showing at the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon, Georgia. The TSBVI wrestling team of Marc Mendez, Mark Medrano, Christian Gonzalez, Ariana Baeza, Davieon Perez, Hector Lara and Adelyn Granger took sixth place overall, and individual students brought home a variety of medals and ribbons.

The cheerleaders won first place in the cheer competition — great job Demetria Ober, Ashley Pryor, Amina Abdalla, Ta’Lia Woodard, Mikkah Margrave and Kimberly Berry. Chanel Davis placed 5th in the Mascot competition.

2017 was our year to host the SCASB Track and Field Competition, and what a weekend it was! The opening ceremony inspired athletes from all six schools. The triple jump, shot put, high jump, running long jump and standing long jump categories took place at the TSBVI track, followed by a BBQ dinner and the performing arts presentation.

The running events were held at McCallum High School track on an overcast, cold day, which was very unexpected for April 22 in Texas. Both Wildcat Boys and Girls teams took 2nd place, showing how hard they had practiced all spring semester. The weekend wound up with the awards dinner and a dance.
School-Year Program

A Partnership with United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)
by Kristine Seljenes, PE Teacher

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has once again partnered with the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) and Amerigroup Foundation to participate in the 2017 National Fitness Challenge (NFC). This challenge is designed to increase physical activity levels and awareness of physical activity in the students that are blind or visually impaired. Students are encouraged to meet (and exceed) the minimum of at least 10,000 steps per day, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and to participate in at least 30 Daily Active minutes. They are able to track their steps by wearing of a Fitbit Flex 2, supplied by USABA and Amerigroup Foundation. Students are also encouraged to become members of an online Fitbit group page, designed to provide an arena for promoting awareness of fitness levels. Through this online forum, the students are able to challenge one another, as well as staff participating in various fitness activities, to accrue steps and outwalk each other in friendly competition meant to promote high levels of physical activity.

Select student participants will receive incentive prizes awarded by USABA and Amerigroup throughout the program for various achievements, such as highest monthly step count, most active minutes per month, or most improved athlete in sports programming. TSBVI students involved in this challenge participated in a Duo Dash 1K race on campus in March, regular outings intended to promote steps and regular training on campus throughout the year. In April, several members participated in the Austin Capital 10K Marathon through the streets of downtown Austin, and in a cross regional track meet with six other schools.

Through this national partnership with USABA and Amerigroup Foundation, TSBVI will receive funding which will be used towards the construction of an outdoor fitness center that is wheelchair accessible for use by students and staff attending the school. TSBVI is overjoyed to once again become national partners with USABA and Amerigroup on the National Fitness Challenge and looks forward to another highly successful and physically active school year.

USABA Membership & Outreach Coordinator Kevin Brousard spoke to athletes about the importance of advocating for themselves and preparing for the challenges they will face as blind youth heading into secondary education and the workforce.
School-Year Program

LEO Club News by Patti Robinson

This year the Mufasa (Lion King) Central Leo Club ended the year with 15 LEOs: Ashley Pryor, Kimberly Berry, Idalia Garcia, Mya Gypson, Nancy Cespedas, Jay Washington, Andrew Walker, Demitri Deese, Sydney Tran, Kambree Willbanks, Aiyanna Strahan, Megan Collins, Salena Contreras, and two local boys, Matt Kennedy and Lucus Parker.

Our service activities included making meals for the homeless, collecting bilingual books for children in refugee camps in Mexico, making Valentine’s Day cards for Dell Children’s Hospital, an eyeglass washing station for parent weekend, and sorting and recycling over 10,000 eyeglasses for people in developing countries.

Our biggest contribution was a work day at the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville, TX where we donated $500 to the camp from our Jambalaya Fundraiser and landscaped and mulched around the dining hall at the camp. Along with the regular sponsors, five TSBVI volunteers from University of Texas came to assist and learn from the students.

We closed our year with a sweet treat at Planet Yogurt. Happy trails LEOs and we will see most of you again next school year.

The TSBVI LEO club is sponsored by the Austin Founder Lions Club, which is the oldest Lions Club in the world. The LEOs and the school were featured in an article in the May, 2017, issue of the International LION Magazine (www.lionmagazine.org).

For Your Information
Texas Children’s Health Plan offers quality health coverage for children and young adults under the age of 21 with disabilities.
http://www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/what-we-offer/star-kids
Short-Term Programs
Summer 2016

Summer Programs (June - July)

During summer programs 2016 we offered a variety of enrichment classes for VI students of all ability levels. Classes varied in length from 4 days to 5 weeks. Below are some of the programs offered during summer 2016.

Secondary Summer Enrichment A & B

A variety of classes serving both practical academic and academic-level students. Students were in themed classes and participated in a variety of Expanded Core Curriculum activities. Some classes included:

- Career Education
- Arts and Crafts
- A Cappella

- Independence Exploration
- Social Skills
- O&M in the City

- Catering
- Acting
- Wrestling

Secondary Enrichment B Class: Gettin’ Down to Business

This two-week class, as its name suggests, had a career education theme. With staff support, students created a small, on-campus business from start to finish. BizKids, a public television series about money management for young people, provided a basic foundation for the design of more specific lessons and activities. Episode 405, entitled “Crash Course On Starting a Business,” outlines five key steps to entrepreneurship: 1. Idea, 2. Marketing, 3. Profit, 4. Funding, and 5. Plan. Through guided discussion and hands-on experiences, students learned about each of these steps, with the ultimate goal to develop and sell a product or service of their choice. Concepts and vocabulary taught included: advertise, business plan, economics of one unit, invest, marketing strategy, product, profit, start-up costs, target customer, and venture capitalist.

Outside of the classroom, students had the opportunity to interview a local business owner, Lauren Lowe, about her experience and visit her retail store, The Burlap Bag. They also took a tour of the production facility at the Austin Lighthouse for the Blind, where employees with visual impairments make a variety of products, such as belts, key and card holders, loose leaf binders, sunscreen, and award plaques.
Short-Term Programs
Summer 2016

Secondary Enrichment A Class: Getting There

The Getting There classes are designed for secondary students who are looking forward to living independently, while attending college or going to work. Getting There helps students develop a good foundation in a broad range of skills related to traveling in the community.

Students explored ways to travel more safely and independently, including walking or taking a bus, taxi, or metrorail. Students used technology devices and Internet-based programs to find information about mass transit scheduling. They also used the Internet to find information about community resources. Students planned trips using this information, solved problems, sought assistance, and traveled daily throughout Austin. They also learned to negotiate local businesses such as a grocery store and a mall. Students were taught, supported, and supervised by a Certified O&M Specialist.

Life Skills Camp

During Life Skills Camp, students were able to participate in a variety of activities, practice being away from home, and build relationships with caregivers other than their family members and teachers back home. This year, our community activities included visiting Mount Playmore, a grocery store-sized indoor playscape, GattiLand with pizza, games, and rides, and bowling at Dart Bowl. On campus, students had the opportunity to play in the developmental gym, participate in simple food preparation, play board games with their dorm mates, and develop their gross motor skills in the playroom. Each activity embedded skills from the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC).
Short-Term Programs
Summer 2016

Elementary Summer Enrichment

Elementary Summer Enrichment is for students who are on or close to grade level. The program occurs during the 4th and 5th week of Summer Programs. Students in the Elementary Summer Enrichment program participate in many interesting, real-life activities that encourage them to apply and practice skills previously learned at school and at home. Each class is built around a high-interest theme for students in elementary school, such as “Project STEM,” “Zootopia,” “Sweet Summertime,” and “Transition to Middle School.” Each class activity embeds skills from the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired (ECC). This includes areas such as compensatory academic skills (e.g., braille and tactile graphics), orientation and mobility, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, independent living, recreation and leisure, social interaction, and self-determination skills.

SWEAT - Summer Work Experience in Austin, Texas

SWEAT is a work program for students aged 17-22 who are on or close to grade level. The program occurs during the 1st through the 5th week of Summer Programs. Some of the job sites from summer 2016 include:

- YMCA
- Ten Thousand Villages
- Austin Public Library
- Umlauf Sculpture Garden
- Double Tree Hotel
- Austin Humane Society

WALIC - Working and Living in the Community

WALIC is a work program for students aged 16-22 and functioning about 3 or more years below grade level. The program occurs during the 2nd through the 5th week of Summer Programs. Some of the job sites from summer 2016 include:

- Austin Retirement and Nursing Center
- Westin at the Domain
- Wheatsville Food Coop
- Top Drawer Thrift Store
- Department of Aging and Disability Services
Short-Term Programs
School Year 2016-17

What’s New in Short-Term Programs 2016-2017
Have you been wondering what we’ve been up to? In addition to our on-campus classes, the TSBVI Short-Term Programs (STP) department is offering new and exciting opportunities for students to receive the individualized instruction they need in academics and in the ECC. Through online learning and individualized instruction classes, teachers are serving students and collaborating with TVIs in a whole new way.

STP Distance Learning for Students
Students can now choose from several different online classes that they can take at their own pace. These classes are offered through our STP Google Classroom site. You can register for these classes by referring your student to our programs in much the same way you would for our on-campus classes. Courses that will be available at the start of the 2017-2018 school year include:

- Orion TI-84+ Talking Graphing Calculator Part 1
- Orion TI-84+ Talking Graphing Calculator Part 2
- Google Classroom and VoiceOver on a MAC
- Google Classroom and JAWS
- IOS Accessibility Features for Visually Impaired

New summer offering - Summer Book Club!
This is a great way for students from across the state to connect! Every summer, a new book will be selected that contains themes that impact students with visual impairments. In the summer of 2017, students are reading *A Blind Guide to Stinkville*, by Beth Vrabel. One of the awesome features of this class is that the students participate in group discussions and share with each other using an online forum!

Individualized Instruction
Last year, we decided that if “you want it, you got it!” You can now refer your student to STP and we will work with you to design a program for your student that fits your and your student’s needs. For example, one way that we have been serving some students is through a videoconferencing tool called Zoom. Zoom is easy to use. There’s nothing for you to install. All you need is a computer with a webcam and
audio capability. The STP teacher sends a Zoom link, you open it, and we begin our lesson with your student, all from the comfort of your own district!

We’ve also had students come for individualized instruction on our campus and we’ve even visited local students. Bottom line, we’ll work with you to come up with a solution that works.

Social Media

We can’t escape from social media! So, in our department, we’re harnessing it and broadening how we use it. We’re posting instructional strategies, tips on how to create tactile tools, and ways you can incorporate the ECC into your lessons. Sign up for the following:
Facebook page: TSBVI Short-Term Programs
Pinterest site: TSBVI Short-Term Programs
Twitter: @TSBVI_ShortTerm

Bridge LMS

At the beginning of the school year, Short-Term Programs was tasked with researching learning management systems (LMS) for campus use. After looking at five good contenders and thoroughly vetting each of them, Short-Term Programs selected Bridge for all staff development. We launched the Summer Training Program for summer staff in April and received great feedback about the content and the LMS. We look forward to the possibilities of the new system for learning across the campus.
Our School Year Programs (August - May) include a wide range of classes addressing needs from academic to recreational for students on or near grade level. Students who attend are able to quickly learn independent living skills in a relaxed, positive environment that focuses on the unique needs of students with visual impairments. Students must be referred by their local Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI). The programs change from year to year. Below are those that were offered during the 2016-17 school year. (A 2017-18 program list and calendar can be found on the TSBVI website at www.tsbvi.edu/calendar-and-class-descriptions)

- You Want It, You Got It: Individualized Instruction
- Junior Access to Academic Skills (grades 6-8)
- Elementary Technology, Math, Literacy Series (grades 2-5)
- High School Access to Academic Skills #1 (including College Prep focus)(grades 9-12)
- Assistive Tools and Tech for Access to Math (grades 8-12)
- Super Science! (grades 6-8)
- Game of Life (grades 6-8)
- High School Independence Weekend: Outdoor Challenge (grades 8-12)
- Junior Independence Weekend: Iron Chef (grades 6-8)
- Elementary Access to Academic Skills (grades 3-5)
- Screen Reader Bootcamp (Joint Student-Teacher Workshop) (grades 4-6)
- Elementary Weekend: Paleontology Rocks (grades 2-3)
- High School Access to Academic Skills # 2 (grades 9-12)
- Empowered: Bring it On! (grades 7-12)
- City Travel for COMS and Their Students (grades 7-12)
- Capitol Experience (grades 9-12)
- In the Driver’s Seat: Intro to Safe Driving with Low Vision (grades 9-12)
- Elementary Independence Weekend: Outdoor Adventures (grades 4-5)
- High School Independence Weekend: Prom (grades 10-12)

Special Focus: Game of Life

Is the game of life a game of chance or choice? Throughout life, we all make choices and navigate roadblocks daily. Students heading into high school are faced with a number of challenges as they transition to adult life. In this weekend course, students
and their parents attended together. Students were taught by teaching staff in Short-Term Programs while parents attended a conference portion hosted by the Outreach department. The goal was for students to understand ways that they can “step up” as they transition to adult life, while parents learned ways to “step back,” as they support their child with this transition. Parents learned about the following topics:

- Transition planning
- Graduation plans
- Supporting the child in the expanded core areas at home and in the community
- Exploring post secondary options
- Experiences shared by other parents and students who have made this transition
- Parents toured the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center and the Post Secondary Programs on the TSBVI campus

On Sunday of this weekend program, students and their parents were grouped together. During this uplifting session, parents learned more about their child’s abilities as well as what goals their child had set for “stepping up” at home. In return, parents had a chance to share with their child what they had learned about ways they can help their child be more independent in the future.

**Special Focus: Empowered: Bring it On!**

Students who attended this weekend course were encouraged to come prepared to find their inner superhero! Using the Empowered curriculum, published by TSBVI, students were immersed into activities with a focus on improving self-advocacy, communication, and personal accountability skills. Students who attended this program discovered how becoming empowered, or taking control of your own life, can help you find success in achieving short and long-term goals now and in the future. Topics included:

- Improving self-awareness skills
- Identifying strengths and challenges
- Coping strategies
Special Focus: Super Science

This class was designed for students in grades 6-8 and provided ample opportunities to enrich their knowledge of science concepts through hands-on, multisensory activities. Students collected data, made an edible DNA Helix, executed experiments emphasizing Newton’s Laws, explored exotic pets, and dissected a cow’s eye! Everyone had an amazing time and reported that they learned a great deal about science!
The end of this school year brought the retirement of eight employees who had worked at TSBVI for a combined total of 229 years, and who and will always be considered part of the Wildcat family. They were honored at a staff-wide celebration, with refreshments and entertainment provided by students.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Paulette Kamenitsa</td>
<td>was a TSB volunteer in 1964, student taught here in 1968 and became an elementary teacher in 1970. She plans to help with her 5 grandchildren. “TSB has been a wonderful journey. The support that is shown is reflected in the many years that so many of the employees spend here.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Kristy Sikes</td>
<td>taught home economics since 1884. She plans to travel, exercise, cook new healthy recipes, attend bible study, and learn to quilt. “I have been blessed to have taught so many sweet and talented students and work with so many amazing staff who are dear friends.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Jane Rundquist and her husband Roland Cardenas</td>
<td>both worked at TSBVI, worked at another district and returned. Jane wrote, “It has been an honor and a privilege to work and play at this most amazing school with the most amazing students and staff! I'm so very grateful!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 &amp; 24</td>
<td>Jeri Cleveland and Nancy Hefner</td>
<td>were classmates when they attended TSBVI. Jeri taught elementary, middle and high school, short-term program and curriculum. Nancy taught braille, technology and social studies. Both have been strong role models for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Joe Paschall</td>
<td>began here in 1983 and taught elementary, career education, drama, adaptive physical education and coached track &amp; field, girls gymnastics, goalball, swim team, triathlon, blind tennis, golf and was a sponsor on 17 ski trips. He is an accomplished athlete, having completed an Iron Man Triathlon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ann Adkins</td>
<td>began teaching at TSB in 1976 and after a multitude of positions both at TSBVI and at other locations, ended her career as an Educational Consultant in the Outreach VI Department since 2000. “We’re lucky. We get to do the most rewarding job in the world.”</td>
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Outreach Program

The TSBVI Outreach Program supports local district programs serving students with visual impairments and deafblindness. The programs provide information, training and support to families, professionals in education and rehabilitation, and community members involved in the lives of individuals with visual impairments or deafblindness, who range in age from birth through twenty-two years old. The support to local districts helps TSBVI fulfill its mission to be a leading center of expertise to improve educational outcomes for students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with deafblindness or additional disabilities.

Outreach Deafblind Symposium
In March, the TSBVI DeafBlind Project sponsored the 2017 Texas Symposium on DeafBlindness. Speakers at this conference included many Texans, and others who came from Norway, Scotland, Pennsylvania, San Francisco and Ohio. Families were an integral part of the Symposium with many sharing their expertise in presentations and representing our fabulous family organizations as they hosted the family area and Friday night social. The National Center on Deaf-Blindness set their annual meeting at TSBVI for the following week so state DeafBlind project staff and family leaders from across the United States were able to participate in the Texas Symposium. As a result, the conference buzzed with ideas that spanned continents as we together expanded our understanding on how to provide family engagement, quality educational services and life-long learning opportunities for individuals with DeafBlindness.

Outreach Hosts Math & Science Institute for Instruction
In April, the 4th Biennial Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) Math & Science Institute for Instruction was hosted on the TSBVI campus. This is a national group designed to build community among teachers of students with visual impairments interested in fostering math and science learning. Often, teachers don’t have easy access to other teachers for guidance and support in STEM topical areas. TSBVI staff worked hard to create an engaging program that included presentations on many aspects of teaching math and science topics to students with visual impairment. While POSB is part of the Council of Schools for the Blind, the audience included both specialized school staff and local district VI professionals. The POSB Institute included networking and learning from Texas colleagues and those from New Mexico, Maryland, Missouri, Iowa, the American Printing House for the Blind in Kentucky, as well as many vendors.
Outreach Program

Meet Your Texas Family Organizations for the Visually Impaired and Deafblind Communities

Being part of a family engagement network is a powerful way to learn while being encouraged, mentored and inspired. We are fortunate to have many family organizations active at both the state and national level on issues important to our communities, such as working on the passage of the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act. A complete list and video introductions can be found at http://www.tsbvi.edu/selected-topics/family-organizations. Following are the organizations in Texas serving Visually Impaired/Blind and Deafblind Communities.

Visual Impairment

Texas Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (TAPVI)

TAPVI is an affiliate of NAPVI. We are a non-profit organization that provides support to the families of children who have blindness or visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities. TAPVI enables families to find information and resources, as well as connect and network with one another. We offer leadership, support, and training to assist families in helping children reach their full potential in school and in the community.

View a video from TAPVI: http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance/family-tapvi.html
Visit the TAPVI Website: http://www.tapvi.com/
Visit TAPVI on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/FacesOfTAPVI

Texas Parents of Blind Children (TPOBC)

Texas Parents Of Blind Children is the state chapter of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC), a division of the NFB of Texas, a national membership organization of parents and friends of blind children.

View a video from Texas Parents of Blind Children: http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance/family-tpobc.html
Visit the TPOBC Website: http://www.tpobc.org/

For more information about Outreach Programs, visit the website at http://www.tsbvi.edu/outreach
Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas (DBMAT)

The mission of DBMAT is to promote and improve the quality of life for all Texans who are deaf-blind multi-handicapped, deaf multi-handicapped, and blind multi-handicapped. We support the establishment of educational, rehabilitative, vocational and independent living opportunities.

View a video about DBMAT: http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance/family-dbmat.html
Visit the DBMAT Website: http://www.dbmat-tx.org/

Texas Chargers, Inc.

The Texas Chargers, Inc. is a group of Texas families, friends, and professionals who are dedicated to helping children and young adults who live with Charge Syndrome. The primary function of our organization is to support the emotional and educational needs of the people with Charge Syndrome and the families and professionals working with them, to provide them with a better quality of life.

View a video from Texas Chargers: http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance/family-txchargers.html
Visit the Texas Chargers Website: http://www.texaschargers.org/

Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Texas Hands and Voices

Texas Hands & Voices is a chapter of the nationwide non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families and their children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as the professionals who serve them. We are a parent-driven, parent/professional/community collaborative group that is unbiased towards communication modes and methods. Our diverse membership includes those who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing impaired and their families who communicate orally, with signs, cue, and/or combined methods. We exist to help our children reach their highest potential.

View a video from Texas Hands and Voices at: http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance/family-txhv.html
Email Texas Hands and Voices: office@txhv.org
Visit the Texas Hands and Voices Website: http://www.txhandsandvoices.org/
Visit the Guide By Your Side Website: http://www.txgbys.org/
A Message from the Principal

What a great school year we have had!

As you'll see in this newsletter, we've had exciting athletic events, demonstration of students' creative abilities through the arts, as well as times of celebration such as when Storm Troopers made an appearance at this year's Prom!

One of the highlights of the year was hosting the South Central Association of Schools for the Blind Track & Field and Performing Arts Championship on campus. Students and coaches from the following states' schools for the blind were in attendance: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Mississippi. It was a wonderful opportunity for friendly competition and comradery among the students and staff members.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer!

Mr. Fain
Principal of the School-Year Program

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK!!

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TSBVI Short-Term Programs: https://www.facebook.com/stpTSBVI/
TSBVI Outreach Programs: https://www.facebook.com/OutreachTSBVI/
TSBVI Outreach Orientation and Mobility: https://www.facebook.com/omoutreach/