

# The Lions Roar



THE LIONS ROAR

November 2014

## Focus on Babies with Blindness/Visual Impairments

By DeEtte Snyder, B-3 BVI Coordinator

After about 2 years of work from a statewide task-force of agencies for the blind and early childhood, a coordinator has been selected to lead the state to create a system of collaboration to provide early support for infants and toddlers with blindness and visual impairment (BVI), and their families. DeEtte Snyder (pictured at right) is a seasoned professional in early childhood education for the visually impaired for over 20 years with a Master's Degree from Portland State University in Education for the Visually Impaired and an endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education. Though DeEtte was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest she has lived in Phoenix, Arizona for the past 16 years where she worked at the Foundation for Blind Children, a large non-profit agency for children with vision loss in the Phoenix area, in the infant, toddler, and preschool programs including Director of Infant and Family Services. She returns "home" and to the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) with a wealth of experience regarding the unique learning needs of young children with visual impairments and supporting their families to become the most competent and confident in raising a child with blindness or visual impairment.



DeEtte's goal for the new focus on early intervention includes connecting families to the vital support from Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) around the state in partnership with existing early intervention teams. This includes technical assistance through training and consultation to the TVIs on early learning concepts and effective collaboration with the early intervention systems. Also, she will provide this technical assistance and consultation to general early intervention providers, such as school districts, Educational Service Districts, and other local lead early intervention agencies to help them understand the unique learning needs of our youngest learners with vision issues to increase early identification and referral for specialized vision services. Together a solid foundation can be built between the vision community and the early intervention community to provide responsive local services and best support families of young children with vision loss.

To reach out to DeEtte and request her assistance, please contact her at the WSSB by email at [deette.snyder@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:deette.snyder@wssb.wa.gov) or phone at (360) 696-6321 x172. She is looking forward to hearing from you and focusing on the informational, instructional, and emotional support necessary to raise happy, healthy, and successful children regardless of their visual limitations!

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facebook

People can now connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. WSSB posts updates to these sites which include daily happenings, activities, inclement weather updates, kudos, and other fun and important information.

To stay updated, you can find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/sch4blind> and Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/sch4blind>.



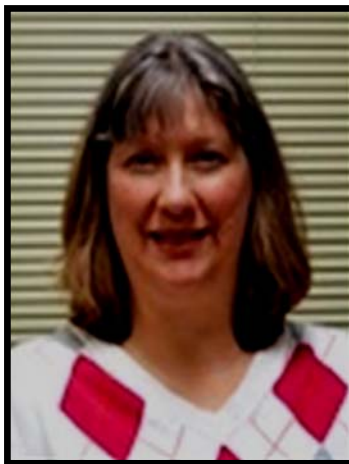
## Board of Trustees Update

By Janet Kurz, Executive Assistant

Please join me in welcoming two new Board members, Lilly Longshore, who will be our Parent Representative and Michelle Farrell who will be representing Congressional District 9.

Lilly's son, Alex, attended WSSB during middle school. From Lilly: "Alex benefited greatly from the expertise and supportive staff at WSSB. He learned what was supposed to be happening in a classroom; he grew in self-confidence and became a much better self-advocate." Alex has since successfully transitioned into Vancouver's ITech Preparatory High School where he is currently a sophomore. He still benefits from the support services of WSSB's Outreach program.

Lilly (pictured at right) has two years experience as a secondary science teacher. However, most of her professional life she worked as a civil engineer. Two years ago Lilly ended her twenty year career in the environmental field. Lilly's new focus and passion is writing. She has successfully published articles on wheelchair accessible travel and hopes to continue writing and sharing information and possibilities to improve lives of others with mobility limitations.



Michelle (pictured below) was appointed to the Board of Trustees representing the 9<sup>th</sup> district. After an initial career in the legal field and then being a stay-at-home mom, navigating through the world of Special Education for her 2 children; she worked as a Parapro/Transcriber for 5 years in the Issaquah School District. While working full time with a variety of TVI and Orientation & Mobility (O&M) instructors, Michelle went through the University of Northern Colorado and got her Masters in Visual Impairment and O&M, subsequently getting ACVREP certification. This year is her 5<sup>th</sup> year as the TVI/COMS in the Bellevue School District and has contracted with several other districts on the eastside during that time as well.

Her work and life experience has allowed her to come to this profession with a unique perspective of having been on all sides of the equation. She knows what it's like to sit at the table as the parent, teacher and support staff and this allows her to more fully meet the needs of her students and families. Michelle will use her unique perspective in any way possible to help those served by WSSB and throughout the state of Washington.



## Daily Living Skills (DLS)-Dinner

By: Tess Scholl, Residential Life Dean

Wednesday night DLS dinners are a perfect opportunity for all residential students to get some practice in the kitchen. Staff guide students of all ages and abilities in preparing a meal for the whole cottage.

The learning has already begun as you can see in the picture to the right; boys from Chapman cottage are hard at work making Orange Chicken, stir fried rice and chocolate chip cookies.





## WSSB Board of Trustees—Openings

By Janet Kurz, Executive Assistant

WSSB has an advisory Board whose purpose is to provide advisory services to the legislature and to the Superintendent, in the development of programs for the blind and visually impaired (BVI), and in the operation of the school. Trustees are appointed by the Governor to serve a term of five years.

WSSB currently has one opening; Congressional District 10 (much of Thurston County and western Pierce County). To apply for a Board position, go to: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards/default.asp>. On that website you will find an online application that can be completed and submitted to the Boards and Commissions office for consideration. To find out if you are located in this district, you can input your home address at: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>. WSSB also has a group of Ex-Officios who represent the teachers (WPEA), classified staff (WFSE), the Washington Council of the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Washington and a Parent Representative. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Dean Stenejem, Superintendent, at (360) 696-6321, ext. 130.

## Pacific Foundation for Blind Children (PFBC)

By JaReda Webb, Executive Director

Introducing the “PFBC Kid Challenge!”

Involving your child in donating to charity is a great way to instill a sense of compassion and generosity. Talking gently with your child about the needs and problems in the community helps make them aware of issues other folks are dealing with. You can teach your child empathy and that by giving to charity their money really can make a difference.

One of our Board members, Marc Krsul, has grade-school aged kids (pictured to the right) and decided to involve his kids in donating to charity. To help make an even bigger impact, he and his wife told the kids they would match their donations, doubling their impact. Since the family is passionate about the Pacific Foundation for Blind Children and the work we do, it was an easy decision for the kids to want to help blind and visually impaired children and babies.

The family has generously extended a matching opportunity for other kids and families. To participate, submit donations *made by kids* between \$5-\$25. The donation must be matched by a parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent, etc. It will then be matched by the Krsul family as well. So a \$20 donation made by a child, becomes \$40 when their parents match it, and then becomes \$60 when the Krsul family matches it! What a great compounding effect!

Once these young donors understand how good it feels to help others, they will want to encourage their friends and relatives to do the same! Our PFBC Kid Challenge will last until we reach \$500 in donations made by children.

Tell your friends and give today! [www.pfbc1.org](http://www.pfbc1.org)





## Superintendent's Article

By Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, Superintendent

It seems like the school year has just begun and we are already into November. On-campus enrollment, including online courses being taught, on-campus direct service to students and LIFTT (5<sup>th</sup> year program) totals 73 students.

About five years ago WSSB decided to limit on-campus enrollment to 5th-6th grade and older students while enhancing services to preschool and elementary students in their home districts. The on-campus program provides intensive services which are needed by many students at various times in their lives and can make a substantial difference both academically and with a focus on Expanded Core Competencies (blindness/low vision skill development). It is not uncommon to see 1.5 to 3.5 years of growth within the first year students attend the on-campus program. This 24-hour coordinated program (Individualized Education Program) allows all staff to work in unison in helping students not only gain a wide range of skills, but also helps students gain confidence and build self-esteem. This, coupled with accessible online learning options, is helping to open new doors of opportunities for students.

Outreach services (providing both direct and consultative services in BVI students/districts) continues to expand along with WSSB providing support to TVIs and O&M staff throughout Washington. Currently WSSB has approximately 18 TVI/O&M Outreach staff located throughout the state working in many districts. Districts contract with WSSB for these direct service teachers which help students gain needed skills for independence and success. Along with direct services provided on an itinerant basis, WSSB also provides Assistive Technology support services to districts, trainings for TVIs throughout the Pacific Northwest and continues to recruit TVIs and O&M instructors throughout our state to help districts find highly qualified teachers.

Recently, WSSB purchased a modular home which has been located on the campus to provide housing for student teachers during their practicum, both on-campus and through regional outreach. It is our

hope that we will be able to attract student teachers from throughout the U.S. and Canada to Vancouver with the goal of keeping some of these teachers in Washington to help fill statewide shortages. This house will be open for student teachers by mid-November, 2014.

Beginning the fall of 2014, WSSB has entered the Birth to Three service arena upon the recommendation of a statewide task force. DeEtte Snyder has been hired to help coordinate Birth to Three services for students in Washington (please see article on page 1). The statewide task force's goal is to improve statewide services for BVI infants and toddlers and their families. Through improved identification (child find), awareness of needs of BVI infant/toddlers, training to service providers and parents, and exploring multiple funding sources that could be more efficiently used and/or directed to help BVI children receive improved services. This will be a big task, but the task force and DeEtte are up to the challenge.

The above is just a small sample of the array of services provided by WSSB in partnership with a number of organizations. WSSB will continue to diversify services and build new partnerships both within our state and throughout the U.S. in an attempt to not only improve services, but find new and different ways of providing high quality services in the most efficient and effective manner. Currently WSSB serves about 2,000 students per year and provides in-service training to about 300 teachers, paraprofessionals and parents, and produces over 600,000 pages of braille and provides digital curricular information to over 50,000 people. These services would not be possible without our many wonderful partners.

As Helen Keller stated, "Alone we can do so little, Together we can do so much".

## Outreach Update

By Craig Meador, Director of Outreach

With a quarter of the school year completed, WSSB's Outreach Department is in full swing serving thirty-eight districts and over 200 students in the state of Washington. We have made some adjustments this year to cover some leave, which has limited our ability to complete one-time evaluations throughout the state. I have been able to connect districts with other TVI's and O&M specialists to complete evaluations with some delay to the districts.

**Outreach Fall Meeting:** We just convened our Fall Meeting in Olympia with 25 participants from Vancouver, Longview, Kelso, Olympia, Renton, and Lewis County. Several topics were covered which included: Smarter Balance Assessment, the new SMART Braille from APH, Using the App "Numbers" to make the paperwork easier, dealing with a visual world for our students (a discussion to explore OCR options) and a general discussion about issues in the field. These meetings have been an excellent opportunity to share our successes and our challenges. I am looking to expand these meetings to other areas within the state so that other TVI's not from WSSB can share in these learning opportunities.

**Smarter Balance Update:** Despite the efforts of the state, the online version of Smarter Balance Assessment will not be available this year. The reasons for this are three-fold: a lack of funding, timely delivery of technology and a software glitch that needs to be worked out. The state of Washington will plan on providing the test in braille this year.

## Online Math Classes

By Mike Bicknell, Digital Learning Coordinator

WSSB delivers online math classes for blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind students, grades 6 through 12, as part of our synchronous distance learning program. Our highly qualified TVI math teachers--Lisa Hodge, JJ Isaacson, and Sonja Steinbach--are currently teaching 7th Grade Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1 and Algebra 2. In the past we've offered Geometry, and in the future we could provide Pre-Calculus, and more. We currently serve seven distance learning students--four students are scattered throughout Washington, one in Oregon, one in Idaho, and this year we have a new student in Alaska. All seven join the class using Microsoft Lync, an accessible videoconference meeting software, from school, from home, from vacation destinations. All distance learning students have a chance to interact not only with a teacher of the visually impaired, but also with students just like them.

We find that many students progress much faster in our programs than they would if taught solely in their home district. Braille users also improve their

skills rapidly as they learn the specialized Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics. We also loan school districts the costly Braille or large print textbooks and math manipulatives for students. This alone is worth the cost of tuition, which is currently set to \$1000 per semester.

We expect this program to expand in the coming years and are looking for teachers who wish to teach math, science, technology, and possibly other subjects remotely from their home or school. We can also help general education teachers become Teachers of the Visually Impaired, a coveted job with great perks. We are also open to partnering with non-profits, schools, corporations, and foundations that wish to help fund or to otherwise contribute to our unique program.

For inquiries, please contact Mike Bicknell, WSSB Digital Learning Coordinator, at 360-696-6321, ext. 133 or [mike.bicknell@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:mike.bicknell@wssb.wa.gov).

## WSSB Students—Tandem Cyclists

By Steve Rosvold, WSSB Volunteer

It's an age old question for cyclists...do we pedal to eat or eat to pedal? I can't claim we answered that question on our ride but we had a great time doing both. We closed out the 20<sup>th</sup> WSSB ride season with a sun-filled ride to Esther Short Park (pictured at right) and the much anticipated trip to the Blind Onion Pizza parlor for our season ending finale. At Esther Short, as is tradition, we named the newest member to our fleet of two-seater fun machines. The gift from a Vancouver Bicycle Club member was named "Midnight" in honor of its sleek, dark finish. The folks at Blind Onion prepared some great pizza for our hungry cyclists and made us feel right at home.

The ride marked the 146 WSSB ride over the past 10 years and 20 seasons. In the first 20 seasons over 200 student/staff stokers, mostly from the WSSB, and nearly 150 captains have logged over 12,500 miles, the equivalent of two round trips to Disney World from Vancouver or slightly more than half way around the world. Let's make the next 20 seasons even better!

Thanks to this season's stokers, volunteer captains and WSSB staff:

<u>Stokers</u>	<u>Captains</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Angelica	Andy Hansen	Adrienne Fernandez
<b>Damian</b>	<b>Mike Bingle</b>	<b>Mark Raetzman</b>
Chloe	Phil Brown	Tess Scholl
<b>Dima</b>	<b>Rich Coffman</b>	
Elora	Dave Czech	
<b>Gage</b>	<b>Ole Helgersen</b>	
Hannah	<b>Larry Holzman</b>	
Husai	Pam Link	
Isaiah	<b>Clay Kind</b>	
Jim	Karmay Miller	
Karley	Connor Miller	
Klaira	Ken Ragsdale	
<b>Mia</b>	Steve Rosvold	
Sophia	<b>Clay Sharp</b>	
	Chris White	
	Mary Zamani	

Names in **Bold** made every ride this season.

NEWS FLASH—WSSB Tandem captains Mary Zamani and Dave Czech are engaged and will be wed later this year. Best wishes and congratulations!

A shout out to David Feldman of Feldman's Bicycle Repair ([feldmanbike@yahoo.com](mailto:feldmanbike@yahoo.com) 503-998-7249) for keeping our tandems in great repair again this season.

Ride Safe, Have Fun!



## Ogden Resource Center (ORC) Update

By Colleen Lines, Director-ORC

### Spotlight on Braille Services!

As I looked through files of documents, to write this article, I realize how privileged I am to be a part of this important milestone in our state's history. I want to thank Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, WSSB Superintendent, for giving me the opportunity for this accidental career in the world of dots!

### Historical

To make a long story short, the ADA was passed in January 1992. Governor Mike Lowry decreed Executive Order 93-03 Implementing the ADA in 1993. By August 1993 the "Braille Access Center" was open for business. Demand for braille just grew and grew! We needed more transcribers and proofreaders to keep up!

### Partnership with Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW)

These women are the best of the best! They take pride in their work and continually work on additional certifications. All of these women create fantastic tactile graphics! It's a win-win for all! By using our WCCW transcribers we save districts and agencies a lot of money! Our work is of the highest quality and proofread by certified proofreaders.

Our WSSB on-site staff: Kandi Lukowski and Angela Vargas, both Braille Coordinators are NLS certified; and Zach Lattin and Mike Sivill, both NLS certified act as braille experts in specific subject matter, and proofreaders. We are here to assist you with braille questions.

Our certifications are impressive (including WSSB staff):

- 20 NLS Literary
- 8 NLS Nemeth (Math & Science)
- 3 NLS Associate of Music
- 1 NLS Full Music
- 2 NBA Textbook Formatting
- 4 NLS Proofreaders

### Remote Braille Transcription for YOUR District or Agency

If your district or agency is in need of a quality, quick turn-around transcription, we can work with you! E-mail [braille@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:braille@wssb.wa.gov) or call us at 360-696-6321 x.183 for details.

The process is easy as 1-2-3!

1. E-mail a file or a scanned document
2. We transcribe and proofread the document.
3. We e-mail you the braille ready file to emboss at your site or we mail hard copy braille.

### Fall Transcribing Special!

Do you know what curriculum your braille student will need for next year? If you do and it needs transcribed, we will give your district a 30% discount, if you make your request before January 1. We can transcribe any subject, including foreign languages and music! References will be happily given upon request.

## WSSB Students Attend Disability Lecture

By Adrienne Fernandez, Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator

Five WSSB students attended Representative Cyrus Habib's lecture that was held at the Washington State University (WSU)-Vancouver campus in October (pictured at right). The lecture kicked off WSU's celebration of Disability Awareness Month.





## WSSB Students Love to Golf!

By Adrienne Fernandez, Volunteer/Recreation Coordinator

The Children's Golf Course and First Tee of Greater Portland, along with WSSB's amazing volunteers, lead another wonderful season of golf (pictured at right).

In addition to learning the ever popular sport of golf, WSSB students learn the Nine Core Values of the First Tee Program, Honesty, Integrity, Perseverance, Sportsmanship, Confidence, Courtesy, Respect, Responsibility, and Judgment.



## Update from Irwin

By Hans Michielsen, Principal

This year has gotten off to a great start! We are already more than half way through our first quarter and staff and students alike seem to be settling into their schedules with ease. We are enthusiastic to observe and facilitate a new year of learning and growth for our students.

We have many new students on campus this year along with a few new staff that I'd like a moment to introduce. Two former WSSB students have returned to share their knowledge from the other side of the desk. First, Ms. Mai Nguyen, has come to us from the Idaho School for the Blind and is doing a great job teaching English. Second, Ms. Sonja Steinbach, a graduate from Portland State University is our fantastic new Math teacher. Lastly, Mrs. Cindy Varley, our new secretary, has come to us from the Administration department in the Old Main building on campus. Welcome to Irwin, ladies!

Additionally, we would like to welcome Mr. Mike Bicknell who is heading up the Distance Learning and Technology department. Mike comes to us from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. We are excited to have him as an addition to our team!

This year one of our own students, Jessica Ruff, took 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the APH Convention's Art Show. Jessica's art piece is an adorable Muppet. The soft marigold fabric puppet has two waving arms affixed with a black "uni-brow" over two eyes. It also has two cat like ears along with four sharp teeth (pictured at right). Great job Jessica!

We have many events planned this year. Our first event was an informal Open House. The event started with a fantastic spaghetti dinner followed by a Fall Music Showcase. A great time was had by all!





# 2014-2015 Upcoming Events

November	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Veterans Day Holiday Board of Trustees Meeting Thanksgiving Holiday	November 1 November 11 November 14 (11am-4pm) November 24-28
December	Tree Decorating Winter Holiday Program Winter Holiday	December 4 (2:05pm) December 18 December 22-January 2
January	Students returning by bus/air Board of Trustees Conference Call M.L. King's Birthday Lions Swim Meet End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter/1 <sup>st</sup> Semester PAYDAY Assembly	January 4 January 14 January 19 January 22 January 23 January 26
February	President's Day	February 16
March	Board of Trustees Meeting Talent Show and Recital End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	March 13 (11am-4pm) March 26 (6PM) March 27

## WSSB Board of Trustees

Congressional District 1: Ed Snook, Chair, 8301 NE Juanita Drive, Kirkland, WA 98034 (425) 814-1716  
Congressional District 2: John Glenn, 7 Woodrush Ct., Bellingham, WA 98229 (360) 715-9162  
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Congressional District 10: Denise Colley, 1401 Northwest Lane SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-5783

## WSSB Ex-Officio Members

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Washington Council of the Blind: Berl Colley, 1401 Northwest Lane SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-5783  
WFSE Local #1225: Scott Hone, 2214 East 13 Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321  
National Federation of the Blind of WA: Mike Freeman, 3101 NE 87 Ave, Vanc., WA 98662, (360) 576-5965  
Parent Representative: Lilly Longshore, 2705 NE 115th Street, Vancouver, WA 98686, (360) 991-5013

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