

# IPVI INSIGHTS

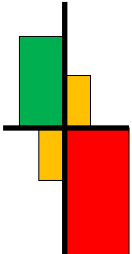
*Connecting & Supporting Families Whose Children are Visually Impaired, Including Those with Additional Disabilities*

**December  
2016**



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Filiberto Almendarez III



Happy Holidays Everyone. It's a time to be Thankful and Hopeful. A beautiful time to reminisce on the challenges and successes our children have gone through including us as parents. There have been breakthroughs in medical treatment, new approaches in education and extreme advancements in technology. Our children can retain the vision they have, use visual books to read and be taught braille in school. I have spoken to parents with older children and none of this existed 10/12 years ago. They had to teach their child Braille and a CCTV/Video Magnifier was not portable friendly. So, enjoy the Holidays and in case you are wondering what to give your child, here are a few tips to save some time. How about an inflatable Bouncer where your child can safely jump to stay active. Or a Rocking Horse to play on. Maybe a Sing along CD player or a musical instrument where your child can express themselves. Remember parents, "Patience is a Virtue" and soon enough you will know whether to continue or move on to another theory. Be creative and do not let fear limit your ideas. I too was fearful of my child injuring himself. But we tried, and now he swims, ice skates, knows Judo, rides a bicycle and so far strums a guitar. We are working on the guitar. Also, there are endless Holiday crafts to make to decorate the tree or the house. Baking cookies and cupcakes is fun too, along with deciding who gets to eat the chocolate filled spoon at the end. Lastly, don't forget the greeting cards in Braille or talking cards or even a beautiful walk together. The kindness is endless. With that I say:

**KINDNESS** can be felt, heard, seen and understood by All!

From the kindness of my heart, I say Thank You to the Doctors, Educators, Administrators, Donors, Volunteers and the countless helpers.

And to all, Live each day as a holiday with your child.

Happy Holiday and a Healthy New Year!

MEMORIES OF  
HEIDI MUSSER

Prepared for: IPVI Insights - Issue December 2016

SEEDLINGS BRAILLE BOOKS FOR  
CHILDREN

On Thanksgiving Day 2016, I happened to notice on Face Book the following thank-you note by Debra Bonde:

*Happy Thanksgiving to our wonderful volunteers, donors and other supporters. We are thankful for you, because you are the reason we are able to give the gift of literacy to blind and visually impaired children all around the world! Thank you.*

Seedlings Braille Books for Children is a non-profit, tax-except organization dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing high quality, low cost Braille books for children. Way back in 1984, Debra Bonde did not imagine that her idea to provide children with Braille books would become the world's foremost supportive organization of literacy for blind and visually impaired children, their teachers and families. One tiny seed of an idea spread not only nationwide, but worldwide!

What puzzles me is why, after more than 30 years, the idea has not caught on with government education policy makers and why Debra Bonde still needs to be asking for private donations to transcribe print books into Braille. Shouldn't the needs for blind children and visually impaired children fall under the same need category as for sighted children, and Braille books should be readily available? Do blind and visually impaired

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children not hold equal value and status within our nation?

When I was a child at elementary school level, my mother had to search for a volunteer to type out manually the books she wanted me to read. One of these Braille books, titled "Abraham Lincoln for the People" by Anne Colver (transcribed on an old-fashioned Perkins Braille in 1979), holds a special place in my heart and on my book shelf in my room. I consider it one of the treasures among my personal possessions! Why? With this book, my mother and I had proven to teachers in Chicago Public Schools that as a totally blind child from birth, I was capable of reading Braille and understanding what the author wanted to convey to me as a young reader about one of our most famous American Presidents. (When I was 6 years old, the Chicago Public School psychologist wrongly attached to my name the label: IQ 58. I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Northeastern Illinois University in May 1996.)

Helen Keller already said: *"The only lightless dark is the night of ignorance and insensibility."* Roman Statesman Cicero (106-43 BC) already proclaimed: *"A room without books is like a body without a soul."* Why have parents of blind and visually impaired children and special education teachers not come forward to support Debra Bonde and claim clearly what Victor Hugo said: *"An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come."* (I apologize for all these quotations, but my mother often drilled me with words of famous people while running on the treadmill to train for races; but I admit that they do come in handy when I have a strong urge to express myself.)

I have been rereading Malala Yousafzai's book "I am Malala, How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World" (Young

Readers Edition). She dedicated her book: *To those children all over the world who have no access to education, to those teachers who bravely continue teaching, and to anyone who has fought for their basic human rights and education.*

Malala was only 10 years old, when the Taliban took control of her region in Pakistan. They said girls couldn't go to school! Her powerful story opens the readers eyes to another world and will makes us believe in hope and the possibility that one person can plant seeds for change. Debra Bonde is another excellent example!

Thanksgiving Day 2016 gave me time to think how lucky I am that I was taught to read and love Braille. I feel deeply thankful that in 2003, Debra Bonde was able to supply the Skokie Public Library with Seedlings Braille books to create the Braille Books Library Collection with the support of former U.S. Senator Paul Simon.

Let us feel closely bonded as the IPVI family to serve as a model to advocate equality in education for our blind and visually impaired children statewide, nationwide, and worldwide.

I will try to continue to do my part to volunteer my time again to help out as Braille tutor in public schools - as I have done for Akash Patel, who is presently a student at Oakton Community College and serving as a Student Government Senator. The common bond of blindness did the trick for him! Why do we not offer readily tuition free teacher training to blind and visually impaired adults and a paycheck for tutorial services is beyond my comprehension.

Please log on to: [www.seedlings.org](http://www.seedlings.org). I promise that you will recharge your soul and want to be part in one form or another of Debra Bonde's work of global proportion.

\* \* \*

**Please write me:**  
**hmusser@msn.com**  
**773-412-4454 (cell)**



Sitting together and listening to Rupa Sprecher read Braille at the Skokie Public Library

## FAMILY CONNECT WEBSITE

**COMPUTERS for \$50 - \$70 for persons on SSDI and/or SSI due to Blindness and to Parents of Children with Visual Impairments**

**Date Posted: 11/10/2016**

Computers for the Blind (CFTB) has received a generous grant, from the Reading Resource Fund-Communities Foundation of Texas, to provide computers at a very low cost to persons who meet the following requirements:

- Must be on SSDI and/or SSI due to blindness
- Must submit award letter from Social Security

rity verifying SSI or SSDI OR

- Parents of a child with a visual impairment may receive a desktop computer package (desktop computer, flat screen monitor, and peripherals) or a laptop. A letter of recommendation from the student's Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) is required. The letter needs to indicate that obtaining a computer at our standard price of \$110 would create a financial burden on the family. No other financial information needed. The TVI also needs to indicate that the student needs a computer and is capable of benefitting from the computer. Note: We have discovered that a child who can press the space bar may be able use a computer with proper training, special software, and USB connections.

Cost: \$50 for a Desktop & Monitor or \$70 for a Laptop:

- All computers have a 2 year hardware warranty and ship for free.
- All computers have speech and screen enlargement software and much more. See website for computer specifications.
- No purchase orders accepted for this grant.
- Talking Typing Teacher is available from MarvelSoft for \$10 through this grant. It is 90% off of retail and is highly recommended for all users!

For addition information or to place an order contact us at:

Customer Service: 214-340-6328

[info@computersfortheblind.net](mailto:info@computersfortheblind.net)

[www.computersfortheblind.net](http://www.computersfortheblind.net)



### Braille Bee Spelling App

*By Amber Bobnar*

Have you ever wondered why there aren't more fun, interactive and playful ways to learn braille? Braille Bee to the rescue!

Once your kids (or yourself for that matter) have mastered the braille alphabet it's time to start putting it all together. Braille Bee introduces five fun word games that encourage kids to read and spell as well as multiple settings options that allow parents and teachers to adapt the games to their kids and give them room to grow and learn. **Find out more about the Braille Bee app and enter to win a free download!**

READ MORE at [WonderBaby.org](http://WonderBaby.org)



### Do Blind Kids Still Need to Learn Braille?

*By Amber Bobnar*

Here's an interesting question: Is reading braille completely over rated? From screen readers like JAWS on your computer or VoiceOver on your iPhone to audio books and MP3s, there are multiple ways to listen to words rather than read them, so why do we push so hard for braille literacy anyway?

READ MORE at [WonderBaby.org](http://WonderBaby.org)



### 27 Braille Toys for Kids Who are Blind

*By Amber Bobnar*

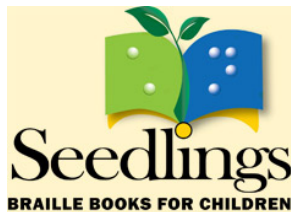
The best way for any child to learn to read is through constant exposure to the written language... and through play! Sighted children play with alphabet blocks or simple word puzzles when they are young to help develop a foundation for literacy, and blind children have the same opportunities with toys in braille. READ MORE at [WonderBaby.org](http://WonderBaby.org)



## The Best Braille Children's Book Resources on the Internet

By Amber Bobnar

You know you want your child to grow up with a love of books. You want your child to be a good reader who cherishes her books and reads often. You know you need to start this love affair with books early, but there is one problem. Your child is going to be a *braille reader*. You may be thinking that this is a real road block, that your child won't have the same access to books as her sighted peers will, but there is a world of braille books out there just waiting to be discovered by your young reader. And these books are a lot easier to find than you might think... READ MORE at **WonderBaby.org**



### The Adopt-a-Reader Program

If you live in Michigan, Ohio, or Illinois, you may enroll your VI child in Seedlings' Adopt-a-Reader Program. Once we match you with one of our generous donors, your child will receive a gift certificate for \$100's worth of free Seedlings' books! It's easy to enroll:

Just download **the AAR Enrollment Form** (<http://www.seedlings.org/special.php>) and send it in with a photo of your child so our donors can learn a little about their "adopted reader." (Only first names will be used and your contact information will not be shared.) For more information, contact Seedlings at [info@seedlings.org](mailto:info@seedlings.org) or call 800-777-8552 x301.

## MAKING SENSE

**Order 2017 Calendars!:** Don't forget to order your 2017 calendars while quantities last! Our large print wall calendar and spiral bound datebook are perfect for the low vision user, with bold lines and lots of space to record all your 2017 important dates. For our braille readers, our pocket braille calendar fits easily into a purse or backpack. Call Brian Hollandsworth to place your order and watch our Facebook page for special promotional offers!

**A Christmas Carol at the Goodman:** Celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with an audio-described performance of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" at the Goodman Theatre. Performance is Saturday, December 10 at 2:00 p.m. (touch tour at 12:30 p.m.). Critics love this timeless performance! Tickets are \$35. Call the box office at 312-443-3800 and mention the audio-described performance.

**Your iPhone as a Magnifier:** Did you know your iPhone can become a magnifier? It's easy to set up - go to settings, then general and choose accessibility. Find the magnifier button and tap to enable it. Now, when you click the home button three times quickly, your iPhone turns into a magnifier. A slider button on the screen lets you zoom in and out. Other controls on the screen can freeze the frame to reduce hand motion. You can also improve the contrast, brightness and color scheme with the filter button. To turn the magnifier off, simply triple click the home button again. For more tips on using your iPhone, call us at Second Sense (312-236-8569) to talk with one of our technology tutors.

*Reprinted from MAKING SENSE, December 2016, Second Sense, Beyond vision loss, 65 East Wacker Place, Suite 1010, Chicago, IL 60601, 312-236-8569, [www.second-sense.org](http://www.second-sense.org).*



depending on you for so much... What do you do? Where do you begin? **READ MORE** at **WonderBaby.org**



### Receive a Braille Letter from Santa *By Hillary Kleck*

Your child with visual impairments can receive his/her own Braille letter from Santa this year. From now until Sunday, December 18, 2016, Braille Works will accept requests from parents and caregivers of children who are blind, to receive a letter from Santa. **READ MORE** at **WonderBaby.org**



### My Baby is Blind... What Do I Do? *By Amber Bobnar*

When your baby is diagnosed with a visual impairment you may feel lost at first. Like many parents, you've probably never known anyone who was blind and blindness wasn't anything you've ever really spent much time thinking about. And yet here you are with a baby who is



### Fostering Positivity and Confidence In Your Blind Child *Shared by cmellor*

I didn't realize that blind people weren't supposed to do things for a very long time. **READ MORE** at **WonderBaby.org**.



### Get a Computer for Your Blind Child *Shared by Hillary Kleck* <http://www.computersfortheblind.net/serve.html>

Computers for the Blind provides computer equipment, software and training to individuals who are blind and families of children with visual impairments. **READ MORE** at **WonderBaby.org**

APH NEWS

**NEW! Tactile Graphic Line Slate**

1-00100-00 — \$41.00

**PermaBraille Sheets:**

8 1/2 x 11 inches: 1-08884-00 — \$14.00

11 1/2 x 11 inches: 1-08885-00 — \$18.00

This one-of-a-kind slate helps you create raised lines for tactile graphics onto various media (braille paper, vinyl, foil, and drawing film).

The Tactile Graphic Line Slate and specially designed two-ended stylus accommodate the tooling of common tactile line types for creation of tactile graphic displays by transcribers, teachers, and students. Use this light-weight slate to embellish tactile maps, graphs, charts, number lines, etc.

Combinations of the available lines also generate unique, discernible line paths (e.g., dot-dash-dot). The pointed end of the stylus is used to tool the small dotted line, dashed line, thin solid line, and vertical bar line; the rounded end of the stylus is ideal for tooling the wide solid line and large dotted line.

The Tactile Graphic Line Slate mimics the design and function of a typical braille slate, making its use intuitive and user-friendly. Its blue-tinted transparent plastic allows both visual contrast against the drawing surface/paper, and positioning of lines in relation to surrounding tactile elements on the page.

The accompanying Instruction Booklet provides tips and techniques for using the Tactile Graphic Line Slate with various types of draw-

ing media (braille paper, vinyl, heavy-gauge foil, and drawing film).

**Includes**

- Tactile Graphic Line Slate
- Two-ended Stylus
- Storage Pocket (for both slate and stylus)
- Instruction Booklet in Large Print and in Braille
- Measures: 12 x 2 1/2 inches.

Recommended ages: 10 years and up.



**Looking for Braille Books for Holiday Gifts?**

Are you looking for recreational reading books to give as gifts?? If so, here is an easy step-by-step guide to searching *LOUIS* for APH braille books.

Once you are on the *LOUIS* search page,

1. Choose "Subject" in the Search By drop box.
2. Type in "recreational reading" in the Search for box. If you would like to narrow the search by age group, please add "adult" "young adult" or "child" for exam-



- ple, "recreational reading child"
3. In the Choose a format drop box, highlight "Braille"
  4. In the Choose an agency drop box, scroll down and click on "American Printing House for the Blind"
  5. Lastly, in the Max Records to Display box, change to "All records retrieved" and then, click on the yellow Search button.
  6. You will see a long list of titles in alphabetical order, scroll through the list to pick out your favorites!

Please remember APH has over 300 recreational reading titles in braille. If you need additional *LOUIS* help, please contact Resource Services at (800)223-1839 ext. 705.

## Fun with Braille

**Fun with Braille Book, Braille: 5-00110-00 — \$19.00**

**Fun with Braille Book, Large Print: 7-00110-00 — \$19.00**

Braille Practice with a Difference — It's Fun!

This book of entertaining activities is designed to provide additional practice for adults and children who are already familiar with the braille contractions. The activities can be done in any order and can be chosen to practice a specific problem contraction or just for fun. A list of contractions and the activities in which they appear is included for reference. An answer key is provided in the back of the book.



The print edition includes selected activities in simulated braille so that print users learning braille can practice their skills. A complete print transcription of the simulated

*braille is included for non-braille readers.*

## NEW! Large Print and Tactile Protractors

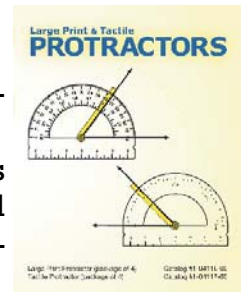
**Large Print Protractor (4-Pack): 1-04116-00 — \$20.00**

**Tactile Protractor (4-Pack): 1-04117-00 — \$20.00**

Now students can use the same convenient measuring tools in both classroom and assessment situations. One protractor is designed for large print users, the other for braille/tactile users. Both protractors allow for the measurement and construction of angles.

**Both protractors feature:**

- Lightweight, clear plastic
- Movable, transparent yellow wand
- Open hole where wand is attached for inserting pencil or push pin at vertex of angle
- Notches on bottom left and right allow for pinning the protractor to surface such as a rubber mat
- 6-inch ruler located at bottom of protractor



**Large Print Protractor features:**

- Bold, sans serif, 20-point font
- Upper labels mark every 10 degrees from 0° to 180°
- Lower labels mark every 20 degrees from 180° to 0°

**Tactile Protractor features:**

Braille dot markings on upper edge: 3 dots at 0°, 45°, 90°, 135°, 180°; 2 braille dots at each 10° to 170° except 90°; a single braille dot at every 10° increment from 5° to 175°, excluding 45° and 135°.

**IPVI**

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# Join **IPVI** or renew your membership today!

The *Illinois Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments* is a state-wide, non-profit organization that enables parents to find information and resources for their children who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.

## Your IPVI membership dues or generous contributions help to support all of our ongoing efforts:

- Regular communications which include: workshops, conferences, training seminars, legislative issues, organizational announcements, products, and advice about raising a child who is visually impaired.
- Offers several \$500 college scholarships each year.
- Publishes a resource catalog which includes anything and everything to do with visual impairment.
- Conducts training and support sessions where parents share experiences and ideas.
- Holds fun outings adapted for children with visual impairments at athletic, cultural, educational, and entertainment settings.
- Represents parents of children with visual impairments at conferences, public hearings, and on committees.

## What does IPVI do?

- Promotes and provides information through meetings, correspondence, publications, etc., which will help parents meet the special needs of their children with visual impairments.
- Facilitates the sharing of experiences and concerns in order to provide emotional support and relief from feelings of isolation for parents and their families.
- Creates a climate of opportunity for children who are blind in the home, school, and society.
- Fosters communication and coordination of services among federal, state, and local agencies and organizations involved with providing services to people who are visually impaired.
- Advocates on a statewide level for services to children who are visually impaired and their families.
- Keeps members informed about current proposals and actions which impact on children with visual impairments and their families.

Check one:

Parent/Guardian Membership: \$15 per year.

Child(ren)'s Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate(s) of my visually impaired child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

My child(ren)'s eye condition: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission to release my name to other parents.

Group/Agency Membership \$50 per year.

Extended Family/Friend Assoc. Membership \$15/year.

Medical Specialist \$50 per year.

Scholarship Fund \$10.00

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (tax deductible)

New Membership

Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose this form along with your payment by check to:

IPVI • P.O.Box 316634 • Chicago, IL 60631

**Have questions or need more information?**

**Call us at  
1-773-882-1331**

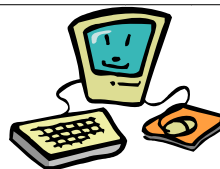
Illinois Association for Parents of  
Children with Visual Impairments  
P. O. Box 316634  
Chicago, IL 60631

## IPVI CALENDAR

*Annual Meeting Coming Soon*  
*More Information in the January Newsletter*

Please call  
1-773-882-1331  
for any questions, concerns,  
or comments that IPVI can  
help you with.

**Newsletter Deadline for  
January 2017 is December 15**



**Check Out  
[www.ipvi.org](http://www.ipvi.org)**

Calendar of Events!  
News and Updates!  
Useful Links to Web Sites!  
And more...