

NDVS/SB OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

NDVS/SB provides individualized services and resources to infants, children, and adults with visual impairment to empower them in achieving their goals.

Meet NDVS/SB's Newest Employee Danielle Hillebrand, Region 4 Coordinator



August can bring a range of emotions to teachers and students. Some dread back-to-school time, and others – like Danielle Hillebrand – look forward to it all year. This year is an especially exciting time for Danielle, as she'll be starting a new job at North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind. Over the years, Danielle says, "I have had the privilege of working with several people from NDVS/SB who have shared their resources, knowledge, time, and passion for serving our students and clients with visual impairments," and she is looking forward to now calling these people her colleagues.

While it was hard to leave her former position in the public schools, she knew she had to apply for this position when it opened last spring. "It speaks volumes that you'll find so many people who have worked for NDVS/SB for years and only leave for retirement. I just knew that they had a quality I wanted to be a part of!" she says. Read on to find out more about what Danielle is looking forward to in her new job, what she's nervous about, and why country living is the life for her.

What is your educational background?

I received my undergrad at MSUM in Early Childhood Special Education, Mild/Moderate Special Needs, Moderate/Severe Special Needs. (That's what it was called at that time.) I then went back to school after working for 5 years to get my master's degree in Visual Impairment with an O&M endorsement from the University of Northern Colorado.

Why did you decide to become a TVI?

As a Significant Needs Teacher, I worked closely with the TVI in my district, Wendy Stoltman. She was amazing, and I always looked up to her. One semester into my master's program for Students with Significant Support Needs, they changed the licensure area to Generalist, and the classes I had taken did not count towards my degree. I was frustrated, feeling I was out that time and expense. Wendy suggested I look into the vision program there, and the fact that it was completely paid for by a federal grant was an extra bonus!

Where did you work before NDVS/SB?

I started my career in Brighton, CO, working with students with significant support needs in an elementary school. I then had the opportunity to be part of a team opening a brand-new K – 8 school. After working 5 years, I began my training to become a TVI and worked alongside my mentor as a TVI. After working there for 8 years, we decided to move back home to be closer to family. I worked in Moorhead, MN, for 3 years as a TVI/COMS. Then I was recruited by West Fargo Public Schools, where I worked as their TVI/COMS for the past 9 years.

What will your role be at NDVS/SB?

I am the Region 4 Coordinator (Grand Forks Region) and will also be providing braille instruction to our students attending short term programs. You may also find me working with Melissa Snyder and Erin Storhoff in Region 5 supporting vision and O&M needs as well.

What are you most excited about regarding your new job?

So many things! Working with new students and families, getting to continue working with familiar students, learning from new colleagues, advancing my professional development, and being a part of a team working towards the common goal supporting individuals who are blind/visually impaired.

Is there anything you're nervous about?

It's been over 9 years since I've worked with infants and toddlers. While I'm excited to get back to working with the little ones, I'm also going to be brushing up on early intervention. I'm excited to play with the babies, but I also want to be impactful in helping them and their caregivers.

What is your favorite lesson to teach?

Honestly, I just love teaching skills that are meaningful and functional for the student. Oftentimes we are teaching skills that provide access for our students, and I love seeing them use these skills to do the same things as their typically sighted classmates.

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Meet Danielle Hillebrand, continued from page 1...

Is there anything you think people would be surprised to learn about NDVS/SB?

I just learned that the dorm area of the school was a pool at one time!

Tell us about your life outside of work.

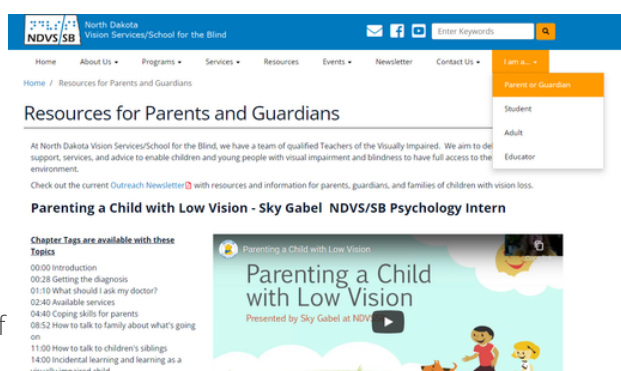
I am married and have 2 busy kids, Aspen (10) and Ryker (8). We pretty much love all things outdoors! We camp/glamp as often as we can from spring to fall. We enjoy country living and operate a horse boarding stable at our home. We have horses, chickens, pigs, and kitties. While it can be a lot of work, it is also a lot of fun!



Wondering who your Regional Coordinator is? Check out our Regional Map of ND and click on the region or county you live in to find out!

Resource Spotlight: NDVS/SB's Parent Resource page

Did you know NDVS/SB has a parent resource page? We do! It includes information on our student programs and our library and Braille Access Center, as well as videos produced by our staff that can help you lead your child to a life of independence.



Above, a student who attended last year's Sports and Recreation Retreat takes aim in archery with the help of a sighted instructor.

Below, two students stand in front of the high ropes course at 2021's Retreat.



Fall Sports & Rec Opportunity

The North Dakota Association of the Blind's Sports and Recreation Committee will be holding their 4th annual retreat at Wesley Acres Retreat Center near Dazey, ND, the weekend of Friday, September 16th through Sunday, September 18th. The event will include leisure activities like hiking, yard games, and campfires. Participants will also get to try out a variety of blind sports like beep baseball, and go ziplining and on a high ropes course, weather permitting. Participants are required to bring their own personal items, including bedding, towels, and comfortable shoes.

If you are a blind or low vision participant, the cost of the retreat will be covered. If you would like to bring a friend or family member to the event, NDAB will pay for half of their retreat fees. Fees are to be determined. Participants need to be at least 14 years of age to attend. The registration deadline is September 1st.

To register, please fill out the form at: <https://ndab.org/recreation-retreat-registration/> If you have any questions, please email the Sports and Recreation Committee's chairperson, Brant Adams, at brant@ndab.org. You can also learn more about this event at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, August 31 during a Zoom call. The link to join is: <https://zoom.us/j/8452432062?pwd=bXUxUk1DRXNlbnkZaM2Rud3lMeXVlUT09>

Have a great year at school! Please reach out to us to learn how we can help support your child/family.
701-795-2700 | ndvisionservices.com

