



RO Spotlight: Julie Anderson

Julie Anderson has been a long time partner and friend of North Dakota Vision Services and the North Dakota School for the Blind Foundation. Every other year the foundation has an art contest that Julie heads up. She also takes care of, and manages the greeting cards that come about it (which by the way are available in the store in limited supply for \$20 for a pack of 15). Last year Julie was the Master of Ceremonies for family weekend that was held in Fargo. Here is a bit about what Julie does in her own words.



I am a teacher of the visually impaired for the Fargo Public School System. I have been in this position for 30 years. Before teaching in Fargo, I had a similar position in both Yuma, AZ and Great Falls, MT. I am blessed to be able to “work” with children between the ages of 3-21. I work with them at various schools throughout the Fargo area. We work on all the core curriculum areas, as well as the expanded

core curriculum areas. Many of the students I teach are learning braille. I love what I do, and look forward to whatever each day brings. As a TVI, I need to be flexible, and go with the flow of the events that pop up throughout each day. I have also worked as an adjunct professor at the University of North Dakota since 2000. I teach Braille Code 1 & 2, and Braille Reading and Writing, which is the way you teach braille to a child. Though I put in several hours of correcting most days, I feel it is important to make sure the next generation has teachers who are competent in braille. In the past, people haven’t taught braille to students who need it, stating that we have technology that they can use. Though I feel all my students benefit greatly and can’t do without technology, I would never make an either or decision for them. We all benefit from technology. When we all stop using pens and pencils, and only rely on our ears to read, then I will consider stopping braille instruction for my students, but since I know we as a society will never throw

Upcoming Events:

- JAN. 7-12**
EARLY ELEMENTARY STP
- JAN. 21-26**
MIDDLE SCHOOL STP
- JAN. 21-25**
SKI FOR LIGHT
- FEB. 4-9**
TEEN (7TH-12TH GRADE) STP
- FEB. 10**
ND GOAL BALL EVENT
- FEB. 19-23**
WINTER BREAK
- MARCH 4-9**
ADULT STP
- MARCH 16-17**
FAMILY WEEKEND
- MARCH 18-23**
MIDDLE SCHOOL STP (6TH-8TH)
- MAR. 30-APR. 2**
EASTER BREAK
- APRIL 8-13**
TEEN STP (9TH-12TH GRADE)
- APRIL 18-20TH**
AER CONFERENCE IN SD
- APRIL 29-MAY 4**
EARLY ELEMENTARY STP
- MAY 13-17**
ADULT STP

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Reaching Out

away these necessary tools, I too will never throw away braille. I often find that people don't offer it as a viable medium to their students, because they themselves do not have an adequate grasp on braille. I am continually working as hard as I can to make sure that anyone who comes to me to learn braille, receives proper instruction and guidance. Braille is a viable medium.

I am motivated by the students. I want them to have every possible opportunity they can have, so I work together closely with parents, teachers and students to create the best working environment I can. I am most passionate about working with students to help them realize their fullest potential. My greatest aspiration is to be looked at like one of the people who works on the set of a play. They are dressed in black, and quickly, and quietly come onto the stage to make sure the actors have what they need. They may need to arrange the set a little differently for some, but then they quickly exit the stage, and their goal is to be unseen. I strive for this every day. As my students get into Middle School and High School, I strive to have them become their own stage



hands. A goal I set for myself long ago is to leave people feeling better after they have seen me, than before. It is something I continually work to achieve.

I watched the movie [Helen Keller](#) on TV, and taught myself sign

language, as I originally wanted to teach the hearing impaired. I wanted to be Anne Sullivan, and work with students and be able to help them make sense of their world.

Since I originally wanted to teach the hearing impaired, I should have gone to Minot, but in my family, it wasn't a question of where you are going to college, it was a question of "When you go to UND, what are you going to study?" I knew I wanted a degree in Special Education, as I was drawn to children with special needs when I was younger, and would often walk home with a child with special needs. I joined the Delta Gamma Sorority, whose philanthropy is working with, and raising money for people with visual impairments. I fell in love with the students upon going to the NDVS/SB, and taking classes from Myrna Olson sealed it. I got my undergraduate degree in Elementary & Special Education, with a certification in teaching the visually impaired from the University of North Dakota. I then taught for 6 years, and was fortunate to go to San Francisco State University for a Masters degree in Teaching the Visually Impaired. I was blessed to have been able to study under Sally Mangold. It was surreal to be at get-togethers with Sally & Phil Mangold, Phil Hatlen and Sharon Sacks. I was a sponge during these years, soaking in all the information I could. It was a precious time that I will always cherish. I returned to the California School for the Blind, 2 years after graduating from SFSU, to take part in transition training classes. We took classes all morning, and then were paired with students who had a visual impairment, and worked with them during the afternoon and evening. We worked on the Expanded Core Curriculum, and did some job shadowing and job coaching. I believe I learned more from my student than he learned from me.

I have many mentors. Myrna Olson, Olga Neal, Nancy Getten, Helen Greenlee, Sally Mangold, Diane Mihulka, Kari Chiasson, Deb Johnsen, and Linda Kraft have influenced me the most throughout my years as a TVI. I try to learn something from everyone I meet, but these 9 have a special place in my heart. (I would have said Barb Delohery also—but she walked me into one too many trees during our work on our vision certification ;-)-but I feel she got me looking at the benefits of technology for all students. I met Myrna Olson during my freshman year, and truly credit her with my decision to teach the visually impaired. She is the most articulate person I have ever met. Her classes were interesting, and it was difficult to leave once class was over. She always left me wanting to hear more. I student taught under Olga Neal, and a dearer woman, I have never met. She showed me, by her example, just how capable a person who reads braille can be. I spent countless hours at her house enjoying her delicious cooking and listening to the stories of her growing up years. Nancy Getten taught at the MT School for the Deaf and Blind, and taught braille to multiple students. She originally was a reading specialist in the public school system, and used precision teaching techniques to teach braille instruction. I learned everything I could from this wonderful woman. Helen Greenlee also worked at MSDB, and consulted with the multitude of students in the Great Falls Public School System. The GF Public School system finally decided to hire their first ever Vision Consultant—and guess who got the job. I piloted this program with the help of Helen. She was the first consultant I had ever observed. Sally Mangold

was a total inspiration to me. Her classes were phenomenal and I couldn't wait to return the next day. I was blessed to be invited to her home several times, where I was able to observe, first hand, how well two people who read braille, can live completely independently. Even with full time jobs in education, they still managed to run a successful business out of their garage. They put the exclamation mark at the end of what I want my students to strive to become. Diane Mihulka is so competent in all she does. She has a quiet way with the children, and I am in awe of the information she would gain from working with one of my students for a short time. I was the one learning about my student from her. Kari Chiasson is patience personified. Her humor and willingness to guide me through any situation that pops up as an adjunct professor at UND, is appreciated more than she knows. She has stepped up to this very difficult job, and has positively impacted countless educators, who will go on to positively impact countless students. Deb Johnsen with her quiet, welcoming, uplifting way, showed me how I want to treat each and every person. She made even my most reluctant student comfortable, and they often returned to the school multiple times. Linda Kraft... I don't have the vocabulary to adequately express this special lady. She is always positive and upbeat, and willingly comes to help in any situation. She demonstrates kindness to all, and the information she provides is thoughtful and insightful. These wonderful women keep me striving to be better each and every day, and I am truly blessed to know them.

We will be featuring a TVI in each newsletter so if you would like to be included, email Ryan at rltorg@nd.gov for more information.

Reaching Out

Superintendent's Scoop



What is new for 2018 at NDVS/SB?

There are perhaps many things that will be new at NDVS/SB this year but much of what will happen is yet to be determined. In some regards the new year is a mystery yet to be revealed. Yes, we

all have great plans and resolutions but it seems that most years there are unexpected twists and turns. That is kind of exciting if you look at it in a positive way. We also have to be ready to hold on tight if there are any unpleasant surprises. I choose to focus on the positives and hope you do as well.

I do know that we will have positive outcomes as a result of our staff and partners doing strategic planning to enhance the service we provide statewide to children and adults. The process that began last spring under the facilitation of Dr. Brent Askvig at the ND Center for Persons with Disability has been healthy and productive. After doing surveys and focus groups to gather input our team is on the verge of developing new goals and objectives to carry us through this biennium ending in 2019 as well as the two year biennium thereafter. Our small state agency/school is very good at being innovative, nimble and progressive. It is Governor Burgum's mandate to reinvent government to be as efficient and responsive as possible and that is our goal as well.

One thing that I can say will happen for certain in 2018 is continued and increasing collaboration with **ND Assistive**. With headquarters in Fargo and a satellite office and demonstration center in Mandan, the ND Assistive staff who demonstrate assistive technology have become close allies. Both NDVS/SB and ND Assistive promote, demonstrate and teach people how to use amazing technology to maintain independence and dignity. We all could operate in isolation or we can work together creating a synergy and greatly added value for all. We choose synergy.

I cannot say enough about the dedicated staff at ND Assistive. They refer individuals to NDVS/SB

that need substantial training in what we might call the

more sophisticated pieces of technology for people with severe visual impairment and blindness. In many instances our staff will discuss technology for specific individuals with ND Assistive and the result is superior compared to the two agencies working in isolation. Together we are stronger!

For your information here are a few things about ND Assistive:

ND Assistive (formerly IPAT) is a non-profit organization that strives to bring assistive technology into the lives of all North Dakotans that need it. No matter your age, needs, or disability, we are here for you.

What do they offer?



Continued on page 6

Check the Batteries in Your Talking Book Machines



Now that the holidays are over, and you want to go back to reading all of your favorite books again—remember to check the remaining charge left on your Talking Book machine batteries. It's normal for the battery charge to wear down, even if you are keeping the machine plugged in most of the time. However, if your machine only has 10-12 hours of battery charge left, it's time to start thinking about turning that machine in for a machine with a fully charged battery. And if your machine has fewer than eight hours left, it is definitely time to give me a call. You don't want to get half way through your book and the machine can't finish it for you!!

Just call me, Elaine Legg, at (701) 795-2711 and let me know that you need a new machine. I can have a replacement in the mail that same day or the next day.

Also, if you are having any other problems with your machine, please don't hesitate to let me know. Happy Reading!!

Product Review: Atomic Talking Keychain Watch

Product Review by Rebecca A. Anderson, MA, CVRT®/COMS®, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist

- Available from MaxiAids, LS&S & ILA at cost of \$21.95-\$22.95, as of 12/07/2017.
- It does set itself, however, it's necessary to set the time zone.
- It updates at 3:00AM every day. The keychain needs to be placed near a window, away from metal or electronics. There are places that do not receive the signal: buildings with metal construction & low elevations/valleys.
- When the talk button is pushed once, a male voice announces "the time is 10:21 AM". When pushed twice, announces "today is Thursday, December 7, two thousand and seventeen".
- A neck strap is included to wear it as a pendant. A keychain is attached.
- Sighted assistance to set it the first time would be helpful. The instructions are written in very small print.
- The setting controls are recessed, but applying packing tape over the controls prevents accidental control button contact when carried in a pocket or purse.
- It uses one CR2032 battery, which is the size of a penny coin. The non-atomic talking keychain requires two batteries.
- A feature that is useful with atomic clocks/watches is that when the time changes from Standard to Daylight, a person doesn't need to reset the time twice a year.
- For the price, one could buy two basic talking keychains, but the day/date/year announce & self-setting features make it purchase worth considering.



Superintendent's Scoop (continued)

- Equipment Demonstration Centers
- Equipment Rental Program
- AT Funding Programs
- Equipment Exchange Program
- Telecommunications Programs
- Device Distribution Program
- AT Consultations

1-800-895-4728 Toll-free

In ending I have one more thing to say about ND Assistive. They do a fantastic job with public awareness. People who need technology and rehabilitation due to a visual impairment can only receive service if they know it exists. Whether an individual finds ND Assistive or NDVS/SB first they can be assured that they will hear about the other. We refer to each other; we collaborate; we add value to the customer; **we are stronger together!**

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