



# REACHING OUT

NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

#88

May 2018

## NDVS Retirements by Nedra Hoberg

Life is a journey, and we can be blessed to walk part of the way with phenomenal individuals. Sometimes the walk is over, as people choose a different path to continue down. Such is the case at the School for the Blind. This year we have a number of individuals retiring or leaving.

Gary Bornsen retired December 31, 2017. I had only known Gary for such a short time, and yet it was so obvious how important his service has been to our organization. I am sure we will continue getting calls for him for years to come.

Elaine Legg retired on April 30th after 10 years of service. I know she is greatly missed. Her clients call often to get information from her and have told me how much they enjoy getting help from her. Thank you for your commitment to our family.



Deb Johnsen has been with NDVS/SB since 1986. She started as a part time teacher and worked her way up the ladder. She has touched the lives of so many children and adults over the years. Her patience and passion shows in her work. She will be greatly missed.

Candy Lien had been a teaching assistant in the 1976-77 school year at the

School for the Blind, and also worked about 2 years in the 80s with the Division of the Visually Impaired. In 2001 she was hired as a temporary employee and was hired in 2004 as a part time instructor. Enjoy retirement!

Nicole (Nicki) Haverstock will be completing her internship, so will not be with us next school year. Thank you for all your help over the past two years and good luck on the next part of your journey.

### Upcoming Events:

- APRIL 29- MAY 4**  
EARLY ELEMENTARY STP
- MAY 13-17**  
ADULT STP
- JUNE 3-8**  
ADULT STP
- JUNE 18-21**  
TEEN CAMP
- AUGUST 5-8**  
KIDS CAMP

### Inside this issue:

- RETIREMENTS **1**
- GOALBALL 2018 **2**
- FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER **3**
- SUPERINTENDENT'S SCOOP **4**
- FAMILY WEEKEND **4**

## Reaching Out

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### Goalball 2018 by Ryan Torgerson

As I write this, I should be preparing for a trip to Aberdeen, SD for an annual event down there where they host us for a night of Forensics and an early morning of goalball. The forecast for the weekend is not looking wonderful, so we decided to cancel the trip for this year, as the SDSBVI is expected to have 6+ inches of snow and 40+ mile an hour winds. No one ever knows what can be expected from these spring storms. But, what I do know there are number of students that are really bummed about the decision. They have all worked so hard this past week polishing their skills, and really all year practicing up for this event at every short term programming week we have held.

We did host South Dakota this last February though. Tevan and the gang came up Friday afternoon. The athletes (19 in all) were split up into 5 teams. They had a chance to mingle

after supper with the other players and made posters with their team names that they came up with. The names were: Bad Bunnies, The Goalball Killers, Sea Sharks, Pioneer Bottle Flipping Champions, and The Pink Panthers. After making posters, everyone congregated in the commons area where we had a Forensics/ talent show where the students were able to showcase their talents and help them prepare for other competitions they would be having at later times in the year. Saturday morning is when the games began. There were some very good matches with the Goalball Killers coming out on top.

Thank you to all of those who volunteered their time and resources to help out with our event. I am really looking forward to next year's opportunity to go down and visit our neighbors to the south. I sure hope Mother Nature cooperates with us.



*Top picture:* Two players on the green team waiting to begin play. *Right picture:* One of the teams showing off their team poster they made also showing how tough they are going to be to contend with.







## **NDSB Foundation Hosts First Ever White Cane & Black Tie Fundraiser by Carly Cannon, NDSB Foundation Intern**

On Sunday, April 29th at the Empire Arts Center, the North Dakota School for the Blind Foundation held its first White Cane and Black Tie benefit! The evening kicked off at 6 with a family-friendly concert by Blind Joe Bommersbach, who had a wonderful message for the programming students and all of his fans in attendance. We had over 110 people attend the concert, which was followed by a delicious catered meal in the gallery section of the Empire, which over 45 people enjoyed.

The event was organized by the North Dakota School for the Blind Foundation's intern, Carly Cannon. Carly is a part of the Nonprofit Leadership program at the University of North Dakota and completed the program by serving as NDSBF's intern. After working with the deaf and blind schools in far western Nepal last summer, Carly wanted to engage further with serving educational needs for students who are visually impaired once she was back in the USA. Next year she will be continuing her education at Syracuse University where she will be completing her Master of Science in Cultural Foundation of Education.

The NDSB Foundation would like to once again, thank everyone who donated, attended or assisted in the planning of this event. It was a huge success and we are looking forward to continuing with it next year!



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## Superintendent's Scoop by Paul Olson

Every school year there are great milestones and memories. This 2017-2018 school year has been one jam packed with significant events and change with even more to come. It has been an exciting year and yet very challenging. Our staff went into the fall of 2017 knowing that we would be doing more work with fewer resources. We rose to the occasion and continued to provide high quality services to children, adults and their families.

Week in and week out NDVS/SB staff focus on priorities of the day and the coming weeks, but in the spring of 2017 we embarked on a process to create a vision and a plan for the next three years. Strategic planning for the future is an essential activity for every organization that strives to be the best. As difficult as it was to find time when staff were already extremely busy, we worked through a process and drew up a blueprint that will guide us through the end of our next fiscal biennium (2019-2021).

The goal in this strategic planning process was to study needs and trends to reshape our priorities to better meet the needs of those we serve. Under the guidance of Dr. Brent Askvig at the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, a diverse cross section of NDVS/SB staff considered feedback from surveys and focus groups to identify needs and areas for improvement. A number of ideas were shared around short-term programming and delivery of outreach services. It is our sincere hope that this plan is both ambitious and realistic. We will share more about this plan through communication with all of our partners in the future.

Perhaps the most significant of changes this past year and this spring relate to the retirement of some very amazing staff. I cannot express enough how much I appreciate the contributions of each and every one of these friends. It is hard for us to imagine the next school year and beyond without these dedicated professionals, but it is also exciting to recruit new, talented people to NDVS/SB. With new team members coming on board there is also great opportunity. We are hoping, for instance, to use video conferencing and other technologies to a greater degree in reaching those who are in need of service.

*Continued on page 6*



## Family Weekend by Linda Kraft

Let's Get Moving! was a very appropriate title for a fun filled and BUSY Family Weekend 2018! Families from across North Dakota met at Mandan Public School's Brave Center to learn from one of the leading experts in phys-

ical activity for kiddos who are blind or visually impaired. Dr. Lauren Lieberman is currently a Distinguished Service Professor at the College at Brockport, State University of New York. She is also a world renowned speaker

and author on adaptive strategies for physical education. Dr. Lieberman states that her most enduring accomplishment is Camp Abilities, a week-long educational sports camp launched in 1996 for children who are blind or visually impaired. Dr. Lieberman's message is one of ENCOURAGEMENT and HOPE. She feels that



sports is the universal language that gives all children the opportunity to participate and succeed, when given the correct supports.

It was an incredible experience to watch sixteen families spend Friday evening enjoying "family time" in the Brave Center's pool. Dr. Lieberman spent time with each family, providing strategies to help improve the water experience for each child there.

The group moved to the gymnasium on Saturday, where Dr. Lieberman led parents in a discussion on "setting the stage for a life time of physical activity". This included time spent learning about adaptations that can be made to a variety of sports activities and an opportunity to practice those strategies!

Aside from this wonderful learning opportunity,

this weekend provided parents a time to meet and share with other parents. Life-long friendships were formed both between children and between adults.

This year's Family Weekend would not have been possible without the support of many generous sponsors including the ND School for the Blind Foundation, the ND Dual Sensory Project, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, Mandan Public Schools Brave Center, Baymont Inn of Mandan, Kenmare Lions, Carrington Lions, New England Lions, Korner Lions, South Forks Lions (Grand Forks), Lake Metigoshe Lions, South Heart Lions, Oakes Lions, Regent Lions, Enderlin Lions, New Rockford Lions, Minot Lions, Grand Forks Lions, Fargo Gateway Lions, Kenmare State Bank and Trust, Watford City Lions.

A special thanks goes out to the ND Vision Services/School for the Blind staff and to the NDVS/SB Family Team who worked tirelessly to make this event a success. Helen Keller said it best! "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much!"





## Superintendent's Scoop (continued)

As we approach summer we are looking forward to our summer camps and more adult training at NDSV/SB. We are also at the beginning stages of building our budget for the next legislative period. Our directive at this point in time is to trim our general fund appropriation by 5% and identify another 3% in reductions as a contingency. This degree of reduction is not easy when we already have the perspective that services provided across the state are limited, but we will strive to meet these expectations. We will also look to improve outcomes for children and adults while being as efficient as possible.

So, there is much that has occurred and much more work to come, but we love this work. As I overheard a very smart person say just last week, "We do this work because it feeds our souls."

May you all have a beautiful summer!

These individuals and businesses helped make the White Cane & Black Tie event a success! Hats off to:

Blind Joe	Rhombus Guys Brewing Co.	Julie Anderson
Delta Gamma	River Cinemas	Becky Horner
Dietrich Schlichtmann	UND Bookstore	Kari Torkelson
Menuka Rai "Jyoti"	Ralph Engelstad Arena	Kathy Ashe
Kaija Dockter	Diane Mihulka	Diane Mihulka
Ken Dockter	Widman's	Cassidy Johnson
Leslie Pederson	The Ember	Barb Delohery
The Reynolds Family	Golden Rule Auto Body	Brandi Trom-Anderson
Hornbacher Grocers	Eagles Crest	Bob Syverson
Hugo's Family	The Empire Arts Center	Karalee Maciver
Market Place		Kristi Thiseth
O' For Heavens Cakes	Foundation Board Members:	Jeremy Schmidt
Mexican Village	Terry Lien	Paul Olson, ex-officio

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