



RO Spotlight: Kristina Brown

This edition of Reaching Out introduces Kristina Brown! Kristina works for ND Vocational Rehab as a Vision Rehabilitation Specialist out of Dickinson, ND. For the last 5 years, she has been working alongside counselors assisting adults who have vision impairment as a significant disability and barrier to employment. Kristina is also working in an independent living program to keep seniors independent and active while living with vision loss.

Kristina attended school at Fresno State University, California where she earned her degree in Communicative Sciences and Disorders. While working towards her masters degree in Speech Language Pathology, she took a job in a local school district working with the Special Education department and specifically with students with vision impairment and blindness. It was there working with the TVI and O&M specialist that sparked Kristina's interest in vision. "I felt like I missed my calling in SLP and changed fields. I never regretted it!" Kristina now holds a certificate of VRS in Vocational Rehabilitation from Mississippi State University. She hopes to pursue her COMS (Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist) soon.

Kristina was born and raised in sunny California and she herself was raising two sons there in the little town of Clovis which is right next to the place that is considered the raisin capitol of the world. "Don't ask me to eat another raisin!" she joked. I asked Kristine what it was that brought her to North Dakota of all places and her response was very interesting. "I was



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Upcoming Events:

- AUG. 24**
FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
- SEPTEMBER 5-15**
ADULT WEEK
- SEPTEMBER 15-16**
NFB CONVENTION
- SEPTEMBER 24-29**
EARLY ELEMENTARY
- OCTOBER 8-13**
MIDDLE SCHOOL
- OCTOBER 19**
VISIONS FORUM
- OCTOBER 27-29**
STATE LIONS CONVENTION
- OCTOBER 22-27**
EARLY TEEN STP (7TH & 8TH)
- NOVEMBER 12-17**
TEEN STP (9TH—12TH)
- DECEMBER 3-8**
ADULT STP
- DECEMBER 8**
RETIREES CHRISTMAS TEA

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Reaching Out

Partnering with NDAB

NDAB is an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind. They were established in 1936 as a group of people to help others with vision loss live more independently. Members range from young to old, and sighted to blind and are from all walks of life. NDAB is an independent, nonprofit membership organization that relies on fundraising events and donations to support their programs.

NDAB holds a convention every year in various locations across the state. The public is always welcome to attend. There are a number of support groups statewide that provide education and fellowship to visually impaired individuals. The towns in which you could attend one of these groups are: Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Minot, and Williston. Every year there is a summer camp held at Camp Grassick that consists of a fun week of education and encouragement for adults with vision

loss. Regional Ski for Light is held in Deadwood, SD which offers a week of cross country skiing and downhill skiing for people with disabilities. On top of all these events, NDAB awards scholarships every year to ND students who are blind or visually impaired. The Promoter is NDAB's newsletter that is published quarterly to keep members updated on what is happening in the organization.

Over the years NDAB and NDVS have partnered up for many things. One of the fund raising events held every year is the Walk for Vision. I have been able to walk in this in Grand Forks for the last couple years. We here at NDVS/SB host the local event, but there are other walks in Williston, Fargo, Bismarck, and Minot. I recommend you participate if there is one near you, and get to know what NDAB does in your area. For more information you can visit their website at www.ndab.org.



Superintendent's Scoop

In this edition of Reaching Out we have decided to highlight an important partner organization--The North Dakota Association of the Blind. Over the years there have been many examples of friendship and cooperation. Both NDVS/SB and NDAB are stronger and more successful because of our bond, similar missions and shared goals. A great deal of energy and enthusiasm result from our partnership. The collaborative activities that we work on together foster close friendships that make the partnership all the more fun!

Personally I am a member of NDAB and feel I have gained a great deal of better understanding of visual impairment and blindness as a result. As a sighted person with some significant training I still believe that many sighted people barely grasp the unique issues that people with a visual impairment face. Most NDAB members deal with these challenges with skill, dignity and a good attitude. I believe much of this happens because



of the support and encouragement that comes when one becomes a member. There is a concerted effort to help people learn the skills they need to succeed and be a friendly ear

when someone needs to talk. This type of support goes way beyond talking about the visual impairment in my experience. It is truly people helping people in every way. What I hear people say after becoming members is that have regained a lot of fun in their lives.

I highly encourage individuals to consider membership if they are visually impaired. Some may think it is just for people that are totally blind but nothing could be further from the truth. It would be safe to say that most members have some degree of vision that is usable for everyday tasks. Interestingly, those are the folks who sometimes feel the most misunderstood, so the support given by this group of fellow members is especially valuable. It is also important to note that people ranging from teens to their 90's are members which is very cool in my opinion. Another thing I like about NDAB (which is an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind) is their reputation of being democratic in their structure. They regularly elect new leaders at their national and state conventions and operate in a very cooperative manner when advocating at every level of government. As an organization, they

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Teen Summer Camp

This summer our teens enjoyed a busy week of searching for clues to their future!

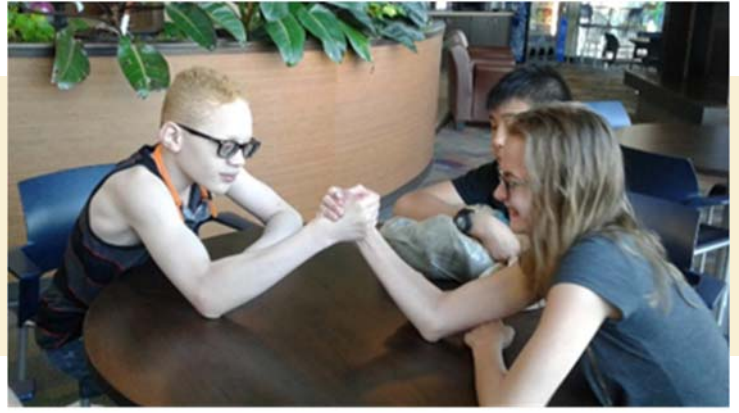
It started with a challenging activity called an escape room where clues were hidden in various rooms of the school to find to apply for a job. All students were involved in figuring out the clues and they worked very well together as a team to be successful!

A tour of the UND campus took up most of the day on Wednesday with the students getting a taste of how it feels to walk and go to class during the day. Learning about the various programs and areas of study got them thinking of what they might want to do after high school.

Volunteering was also a big part of the week with the students volunteering for the Grand Forks park department, the Red River Campground in East Grand Forks, and serving lunch for the Free Summer Lunch for Youth program. This was a great way for our students to give back to other young people of the community!

The grand finale of the week was a campout on the NDVS/SB grounds with s'mores, a talent show, singing, and a hot dog cookout. Everyone was tired from the busy week and so slept well in the tents all night!

-Mary Verlinde



Family Weekend

Family weekend was held on April 7th and 8th, 2017. This was a great opportunity for family and friends to get together and learn. This is an event that the children enjoy as they get to spend time with friends and make new ones.

It was a great weekend! Thanks to all who worked so hard to make it a success! Special thanks to the NDSB Foundation and the ND Dual Sensory Project for their support. Thanks to our Master of Ceremonies, Julie Anderson, and presenters Danielle Hillebrand, Ken Dockter and "Blind Joe" Bombersbach. We wouldn't be able to host this event without wonderful volunteers from throughout the community who assisted with youth activities and childcare! Thank you! See you next year in Bismarck!



Available at The Store

Recently I had a customer come in with an alarm clock saying it was the best thing she had ever purchased. She had one she left at home and one she carried with her in her bag. Well, I decided to try it out in the store and have had really good luck with it. Every person who has bought one from me really enjoys it. One of the great features about it is that it is an atomic clock. What that means is that it will keep its correct time by a daily radio signal that adjusts it to the correct time.

As I am writing this I look at my display cabinet and see that the other clocks we have in stock are losing time. Don't get me wrong, they are all good clocks for their price range, you just may have to adjust the time every couple of months. This product is not yet in the catalog but sells for \$30.

To order this or any of our other great products, Call Ryan at (701)795-2714 or email me at rltorger@nd.gov



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NFB Convention

On September 15th and 16th we invite you to join the National Federation of the Blind of North Dakota for our Access to Technology and resource Fair and Convention! The festivities will take place at the Ramada Inn (formally Baymont Inn) 3333 13th Ave S in Fargo.

Together with our federation family you can visit with vendors, attend workshops and breakout sessions, connect with other blind and low vision individuals of all ages and interests. You can attend the rehabilitation and blindness services panel at 2PM with Superintendent, NDVS SB Paul Olson, ND DVR Fargo Regional Manager Curt Markel, and Executive Director, BLIND Inc. Dan Wenzel. At 9AM our keynote speaker, President of the World Blind Union Dr. Fred Schroder will start us off!

Registration is free and begins at

8AM on the 15th. A schedule of workshops and presentations will be available at registration and on the NFBND.org website in the near future. You can pick and choose what interests you the most.

To attend the state convention on the 16th, you will be asked during registration to RSVP and pay the \$25 for registration and the banquet luncheon.

For any questions, please feel welcome to contact Jesse 701-781-2526 jesseshirek@gmail.com; Sherry 701-781-3055 sherrybeth7@gmail.com

We hope to see you along with all blind and low vision people of all ages, families, students, seniors, parents, teachers and all professionals in the field of blindness. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to attend. There is something for everyone to learn.

Superintendent's Scoop (continued)

are a class act and not every organization can boast of this good reputation.

I could write a whole book on the benefits and merits of this organization. In terms of what NDAB has done for NDVS/SB over the years it has been tremendous. Every time our legislature meets and NDVS/SB puts forth a budget proposal, NDAB is the voice that is heard. The support the leaders and gen-

eral membership provide has made a huge difference every time. NDAB members know the challenge our students face intimately and they care deeply about providing great opportunity and equality for our students. When they come to Bismarck and support our mission, the legislature listens. I want to thank NDAB on behalf of our staff and students. We are in this together!

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RO Spotlight: Kristina Brown (continued)

struggling to make a living for myself and 2 sons. So, I began expanding my job searches in 2011 for job outside of California. After months and months of searching and failed attempts I came across my current job posting on the ND State job site. I printed out the job description and took it to the TVI and O&M specialist I worked closely with. They both shared that they thought that I would be perfect for the line of work. They thought I would really be happy and they were right. I applied and was offered the job. I packed up everything I owned and loved and moved to Dickinson ND. I have never once thought, "Oh my gosh, what have I done?" Well, one -47 degree day during my first winter here, I may have contemplated how the heck I was going to learn to live in this environment. But it was only a momentary

lapse. I knew life was all about adaptation and change, so I learned to adapt and change to survive in my environment. I try to teach people with low vision and blindness the same concept. My career and living where I do now has made me the happiest I have ever been in my life. I have phenomenal co-workers, I can't stress that enough! I mean, they share real passion for making a difference in people's lives just like I do."

Thank you Kristina for all that you do!

-Ryan Torgerson

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

NDVS/SB Visions Forum-- Focus on Technology

October 19, 2017 9:00-4:00

Location: Dakota Medical Foundation— 4141 28th Ave S, Fargo, ND
Showcasing solutions for children and adults with visual impairments.

We are excited to plan this event with our friends from the North Dakota Association of the Blind, ND Assistive and other partner organizations. Morning sessions are geared toward professionals in education and rehabilitation. People with visual impairment and the general public are encouraged to attend afternoon demonstrations and visit with AT vendors. Attending Visions Forum is free. A lunch option is available for those who RSVP via our website.

For more information visit www.ndvisionservices.com and look for upcoming events.



"Build a Better World" Kids Camp

"Build a Better World" was the theme for our 2017 Kids Camp. We had a great week with lots of energy from our ten campers. The day was filled with activities from breakfast at 8:30am to bedtime at 9:00pm. We were happy the weather cooperated by giving us some nice warm summer temperatures allowing time at the Splash Park, playing water relays, and group games outdoors. The bonfire was a hit with roasting some toasty marshmallows and making s'mores following some grilled hotdogs, chips, and fruit.

The students were grouped during the morning hours for reading and writing activities and a creative building edible snack session. They certainly were creative and especially enjoyed building robots one afternoon out of recycled boxes, milk cartons, and all kinds of materials.

A trip to Lowes was interesting as they learned what this store has for builders and Lowes gave the students aprons and a bird house kit. We also learned about and spent time playing at Sherlock Park in EGF which was built in 2011 by community volunteers.

A very special visit from the NASA Project staff was a blast another afternoon! The students learned all about the upcoming eclipse and our great solar system. Who knows, maybe someone in this group will help build a structure in space someday! We know that the sky is the limit for Building a Better World with our talented and creative students!



Reaching Out is published by the ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, an agency funded by the state of North Dakota for the benefit of people with visual impairments. ND Vision Services/School for the Blind is a division of the ND Department of Public Instruction. NDVS/SB does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in employment or provision of services. Reaching Out is available in alternative formats upon request. Please send comments to:



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