



REACHING OUT

NORTH DAKOTA VISION SERVICES/SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

#91

May 2019

Tyneal Miller: Mandan Public Schools VI Para



I am Tyneal Miller, a paraprofessional for Mandan Public Schools in Mandan, ND. I work with students with visual impairments, alongside TVI Lacey Long. I have held this position for 4 years and have been with MPS for 5 years. I am an intermittent paraprofessional which means I serve 8 students in 7 schools across Mandan. The students I work with all have a visual impairment; many have other disabilities as well. During service time we work on a variety of visual skills such as tracking, object fixation, decreasing visual latency, and preferred field of sight. I am motivated working in this position because I myself have a visual impairment called Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP).

Growing up I had services but nothing to this extent. I am giving these students what I didn't have and sharing personal experiences and preferences as well as getting feedback from the students on what works for them, what doesn't work, and how we can collaborate to come to a solution.

My personal goals are for each of my students to be confident in who they are, to have a voice and self-advocate, and to strive for what they need and want out of life as they grow. I want these students to have the ability to teach others about themselves and not to shy away from their condition because it makes us who we are. It allows us to accept the unexpected, to think outside of the box, and most importantly it allows us to be who we are and not what society thinks we should be.

Mandan TVI Lacey Long first approached me about the intervener portfolio and the Deaf-Blind modules. She hired me, she took a chance, and I will forever be grateful to her as she has helped me help others in a relatable way, a way that not many people can say they do. She is

Upcoming Events:

- MAY 12-17**
ADULT STP
- MAY 31**
END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR
- JUNE 2-7**
ADULT STP
- JUNE 2-6**
LAKE METIGOSHEE KIDS CAMP
- JUNE 9-13**
MEDORA TEEN WORK EXPERIENCE CAMP (9TH-12TH GRADES)
- AUGUST 4-7**
KIDS CAMP
- SEPTEMBER 8-14**
ADULT STP

Inside this issue:

- TYNEAL MILLER **1**
- STP UPDATES **2**
- BRAILLE ACCESS CENTER **3**
- SUPERINTENDENT'S SCOOP **4**

REACHING OUT

SD Goalball Tournament and Summer Programming: Cindy Williams

Our annual goalball tournament with South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired actually took place this year! Last year it was cancelled due to weather, so we were excited to venture to Aberdeen, SD on April 5th. We were welcomed with various posters posted throughout the school. On Friday evening we enjoyed pizza in the school's dining room and were entertained by the SD student's forensic speeches. SD students shared poems and stories by authors such as Shel Silverstein and Roald Dahl. From there we all went to Skate Away and had the opportunity to roller skate, socialize, and play video games. Everyone had the choice of "old school" roller skates or skating on roller blades. One of our students had no fear and was out skating every moment he could! When we got back to SDSBVI, staying in the dorms at the residential school was a fun and different experience for many of our students. Saturday morning was filled with goalball! The students played numerous games, switched up teams and even involved parents, siblings and staff.

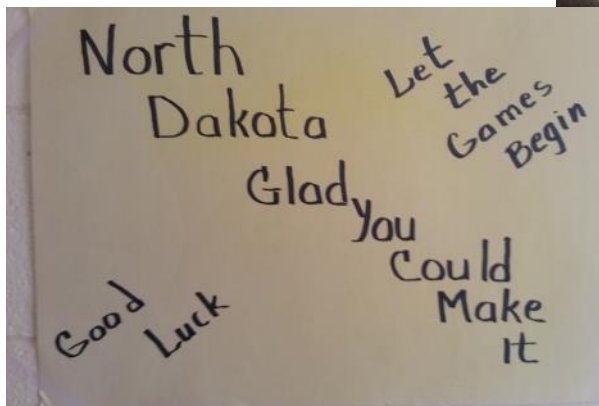
Collaborating with SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for our goalball tournaments is a fun, physical opportunity for our students! They develop friendships and experience new adventures. For further information on goalball visit <https://www.usaba.org/sports/goalball/>

On another note, check out our various programming opportunities available this summer! We have something for everyone!

NEW... Middle School (grades 6/7-9) summer camp taking place June 2-5 in the beautiful Lake Metigoshe area. For more information contact Cindy Williams at ckwillia@nd.gov; 701-795-2704

Our Teen Medora Work Experience (grades 10 and up) takes place in mid-June. Teens fill out applications and go through an interview process to attend this work experience themed camp. For more infor-

Continued on page 3



#91

mation contact Shanna Hanson at shanh@nd.gov; 701-795-2708 or Mary Verlinde at mverlind@nd.gov; 701-328-3986

Our Kids Camp (grades 1-5/6) takes place August 4-7th at NDVS/SB and will have a space theme. Keep a look-out for further information and contact Cindy Williams at ckwillia@nd.gov; 701-795-2704 or Emily Stenberg at estenber@nd.gov; 701-795-2709 for further information.

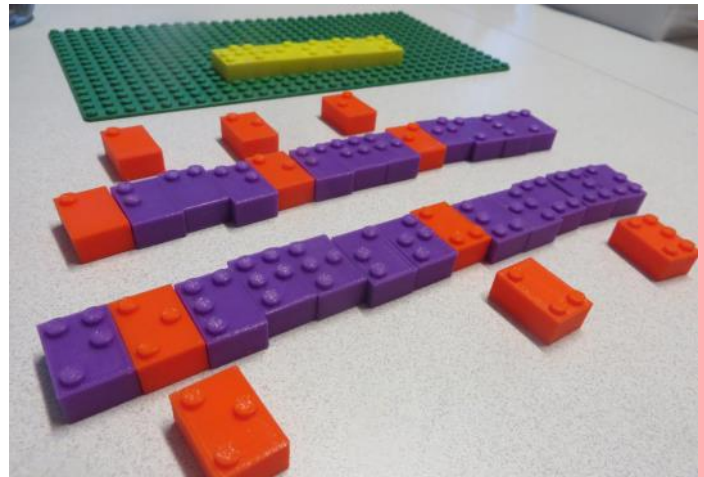


Braille Access Center: Leslie Pederson

The Braille Access Center at NDVS/SB is here to provide braille and large print materials to organizations, businesses, schools, individuals, and others who need information in an alternative format. In addition to transcription, we also offer a selection of tactile braille greeting cards for common occasions such as birthdays, get well, retirement, Hanukkah, and Christmas. We can sign the card in braille for you and send it directly to a braille reader!

In recent years the addition of a 3D printer has also allowed us to print both educational and fun tools for students. Some of the prints we've done include braille lego blocks, tactile maps, landforms, monuments, and even a frog dissection kit.

If you would like more information, please contact Leslie by phone, 701-795-2713, or email lespeder@nd.gov.



3D printed braille blocks



Braille greeting cards

REACHING OUT

Superintendent's Scoop: Paul Olson



It always seems at NDVS/SB that every spring gets busier but perhaps that is just our perception. Either way, the first few months of 2019 have been a whirlwind of activity. Along with Tami Purcell and Laurie Westling, I spent considerable time preparing for and ultimately presenting our proposed budget to both the ND Senate and House of Representatives. The proposed budget will have been voted on and approved by the time you are reading this article. We believe that the funding we have requested will be granted which will allow for full staffing, a little improvement in our operating budget and some modest facility repair and improvement. We are very excited to make improvements in our Daily Living Skills classroom, for instance, where students and adults practice cooking among other important life skills. It is important to us that we have modern and functional learning spaces because we truly want to be the best small school/agency serving students with visual impairment in the nation. We are thankful to the legislature and Governor Burgum for supporting our services and those we serve.

Between April 10-12 NDVS/SB hosted the Dakotas AER conference titled AER Alive. This was a fantastic opportunity for professionals in our field to network and learn to-

gether. Again, it is essential that we engage in state of the art training if we are going to be the best educators for our students and adult learners. This year we pulled in several national leaders in our field using Zoom Video conferencing. Our participants were then able to ask these leaders very specific questions as if they were in the same room. Our featured speakers were Dr. Tanni Anthony (who has roots in North Dakota) and Eric Guillory who is the Director of Youth Programs at the Louisiana Center for the Blind. Dr. Anthony is an expert in many subjects, but she covered early instruction in orientation and mobility for children. Mr. Guillory spoke about transition and being independent as a person who is blind in his presentation titled "Doing Life Blind." They both were amazing, and our participants went home reinvigorated.



There is so much more to share but I will simply end by saying that NDVS/SB has the best staff imaginable. We look forward to an exciting summer of adult learning weeks, camps for three age groups of students and an exciting new biennium beginning July 1st.



Middle School

7th - 9th Grade

SUMMER CAMP 2019

JUNE

2-5

Join us for 4 days of adventure in the beautiful Lake Metigoshe area.

Activities while at Annie's House include: hiking, fishing, archery, pontoon rides, and horseback riding. We will venture to the high ropes course, Higher than the Mountains!

Sponsored in part by: NDSB Foundation

We will leave NDVS/SB in Grand Forks on Sunday, June 2nd at 2:30pm.

We will return to NDVS/SB in Grand Forks on Wednesday, June 5th at 3:00pm.

Those residing on the Western part of the state will be contacted regarding other transportation options.

All meals and snacks will be provided. We will be staying at Metigoshe Ministries.



genuine, and I will always be honored to work beside her. I have completed all 27 modules of the Open Hands, Open Access (OHOA) Deaf-Blind Intervener training. I am currently working on my portfolio to become North Dakota's first intervener.

These modules have granted me access to a world of understanding of a rare human dynamic. The modules include simulations, papers, discussion boards, videos, and research to teach intervener strategies. The work I do with my students is beyond just the VI they have. Communication is often difficult as some students are non-verbal. Breaking through this barrier and giving students a voice is critical. The ability to bring a student to an expressive form of communication no matter what modality it may be (braille, ASL, finger spelling, vocal (hums)) is so powerful, not for me but for the student and their family. Granting them access to the world and people around them may look different for each student, such as vocal descriptions, haptics, touch cues, or hand-under-hand

technique. Another strategy that is taught in the modules is to break down everyday tasks that you and I take for granted.

The intervener motto is 'do with, not for...' I wish freedom, success, and personal growth for each of my students because they can and will achieve it. It may not look the same way as you or I would do it, but in their own way with their mark. Being a VI para, intervener, and someone with an impairment has helped me flourish and understand the world in a new way. Because of my vision progression, one day I will be in a world of darkness. If I can make someone else's world brighter while I have the chance, I will. I will do anything it takes.

I am so grateful and lucky to be here today to share my life experiences and knowledge with others. I truly am blessed to have been given this opportunity in life and have found my passion. I am one of the lucky few in this world that whole-heartedly loves her career.

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