



TVI & COMS Newsletter

Welcome Back!

Welcome to 2015-2016...the year of Best Practices for TVIs! Please contact us if you need technical assistance in any area that will enhance your program this year.

[Christy Householter](#)



Welcome to the 2015-2016 School Year!

Fall 2015



Meet the members of the 2015-2016 Region 10 VI/COMS Team!

- Kitra Gray - Director, TVI, COMS
- Christy Householter-Coordinator, TVI, COMS
- Carrie Hargrave-Secretary
- Belinda Rudinger-Technology, Lead TVI
- Deattia Macdonald-Calendars and Routines, Lead TVI
- Donna Clemens-Social Media, TVI
- Petra Hubbard-Rehabilitation Teaching, TVI
- Hillary Keys-ECC, TVI
- Vonecia Hines-Sports Extravaganza, COMS
- Scarlet Bayard-Baby Expert, TVI
- Sandra Greenman-Newsletter, TVI
- Kara Chumbley-Braille Expert, TVI
- Shelby Walker-Goalball, TVI
- Heather Ballard-TVI (new to R. 10)
- Michele Peacock-TVI (new to R. 10)

*“You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”
— Maya Angelou*



Susan Lawrence celebrates her retirement in style! We will miss you!!!!

Special points of interest:

- *Texas Focus will be in Arlington*
- *Spotlight on VI /COMS in Wylie and Mesquite*

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Unified English Braille: Ready or Not, Here it Comes!

By *Belinda Rudinger*

January 2016 is the date North America will officially switch to Unified English Braille. A variety of resources are in place to help TVIs with this transition. UEB Online, a free, interactive, computer-based course will take you through the entire code, from beginning to end. This class has received excellent reviews from transcribers and TVIs alike. Those who prefer interaction with an instructor may choose the Hadley School for the Blind Transition to UEB course. This course will typically cost \$99, but is free for the remainder of 2015. Fortunately, other English speaking countries have already made this transition, and as a result, the majority of our students'

devices and our braille translation programs are ready for UEB. Have some fun by exploring changing back and forth between the two codes, and seeing how similar they actually are. See [UEB links](#) on the Region 10 VI/AT page.



UEB Online and Hadley School for the Blind are two sources for exploring the changes in the braille code.

[Belinda Rudinger, MEd](#)

VI Assistive Technology

Region 10 ESC

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Spotlight on the TVIs and COMS in Wylie

By *Donna Wagner*



The Vision Services Team of Wylie ISD consists of CTVIs Donna Wagner and Mindy Allen, and our COMS, Alecia Self. Our district is growing rapidly, and we are gaining new VI infants and students frequently. As a team, we work together to complete evaluations and provide appropriate services needed for students. We work together well as a team; we each have a strong background working with LIFE skills and teaching students who have multiple impairments, including vision loss. We strongly encourage support between our families and will create opportunities for families to participate in activities together. With the support of our administration, we are able to provide expanded core curriculum outside the boundaries of our town. This summer, we escorted students to practice their skills with cane travel, to the college campuses of SMU, Collin County, and UTD. We also provided opportunities to work on additional ECC skills in the community by visiting various restaurants and neighborhoods.

It is important to us that our families have access to vital and significant information regarding their child's visual condition. We continually use social media to share information from Pinterest and recently set up our own district's Facebook page for Vision Services. We are huge encouragers of using sensory exploration to present to our little ones, and we have the talent within our group to create unique and beautiful ideas.

Our Vision Services team has the opportunity to impact not just our district, but many outside of it as well. Our team presented a workshop at this year's TAER, focusing on inexpensive ways to incorporate sensory exploration into the classroom and in the home. We have seen firsthand the impact of sensory exploration for our students with visual impairments. It was a great honor to be able to present what we are using in our district to other educators. We were also asked by DARS to present a display of hands-on communication devices and tactile samples of calendars and routines for parents. We wanted to create an opportunity for open dialog with parents to ask questions and gain new knowledge on how to integrate communication with non-verbal children.

Our department also received a \$3800 grant from our district's Education Foundation. The grant will focus on training teachers and paraprofessionals working with students with MIVI. Everyone must work together in a spirit of cooperation with the student's academic needs driving decisions at school. By providing adequate training and effective strategies, the students in our classroom will be provided with more opportunities for growth and learning that was not present.

You are always welcome to come visit us here in Wylie ISD.

TSBVI ONLINE

TSBVI has changed its approach to distance learning. Beginning this year, all distance learning will take place via webinar. You will be able to access the webinars from any laptop, computer, tablet, or smart phone with connectivity. However, the audio portion of the webinar will only be accessible by telephone. In order to register, you must go to

<http://txtsbvi.escworks.net> and create an account. This will be the site to register for any TSBVI training. In order to get continuing education credit, you have to have registered. If you miss the webinar, you can usually access it later in the archive and still get credit for watching as long as you were registered to start with.



Where Do You Go for Inspiration?

Social Media Platforms Can Be a Terrific Source!

By Sandra Greenman

I attended the large technology conference sponsored by Region 10 last spring. I was pleased to note that the key note speaker and many of the presenters included social media sites such as Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube and Twitter in their presentations.

I started using Facebook at first to communicate with friends that live out of town. Lately Facebook has been a good source of keeping up with work related content as well. Region 10 has a Facebook page that includes infor-

mation about legislation, workshops and a variety of other topics that impact educators.

Pinterest is a site I am also using more. It is a great place to organize what inspires you by topic and to connect with others who share your interests. I have been pleased to find many submissions on Pinterest by local area TVIs, TSBVI, and other agencies and individuals that serve our population of students.

YouTube has wonderful instructional videos on so many of the tools that we as instructors

“The Social Networking Netiquette Loop: Read, share, like, and repeat.”

— *David Chiles*

Author and blogger about computer etiquette/ [Netiquette](#)

use with our students.

While these platforms do not replace the materials coming from research, textbooks and other more formal sources, it is hard to beat these places for some quick and satisfying inspiration!



When you see a post that inspires you...like it, share it, and add to the conversation!

[Region 10 is now on Facebook!](#)

Active Learning Conference February 26-27, 2016

Location: James C. Durkel Conference Center at Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Austin, TX

Presenter: Patty Obrzut, Director, Penrickton Center for the Blind, Michigan

This conference will provide strategies and resources for teachers and paraprofessionals who serve students with low incidence disabilities (i.e. severely cognitively disabled, medically fragile, and/or deafblind). Motivating and inspiring an individual with special needs to engage in their environment can be challenging. Delve deeper into Active Learning theory and ways to implement this approach.

Registration Fee

\$100 for Professionals and Family Members through January 15th; \$125 after that date.

\$75 for Paraprofessionals and University Students through January 15th; \$100 after that date.

Assistance is available for Texas family members of students with visual impairments or deafblindness on a limited basis. For more information visit the Conference web page.

Registration will open in early December.



Save the date! We are currently planning this event and will have more details to share soon.

Texas Focus 2016



June 17-18, 2016



Ordering high cost items?

Materials requests for technology items will require justification. We will ask you about the proposed use of this item, what evaluations indicate that this is the needed item, alternative equipment options considered, and whether the item can be shared. An Outreach APH team will review these requests promptly.

The following items require justification for purchase and will only be available for students who are legally blind:

- Visiobook
- Orion TI84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator
- Book Port DT
- Book Port
- Braille Plus 18
- Refreshabraille 18



Click above for complete guidelines for ordering APH materials.

Looking Out for Kids... Teamwork Works!

By Kristie Smith



Spotlight on Mesquite ISD VI/COMS Team!

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”

-Helen Keller-

Author, activist, and motivational speaker, Helen Keller, once said, **“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”**.

Flash back to fifteen-years-ago when I embarked on a new career moving from general education to teaching children with a visual impairment. During my vision certification classes, I was fortunate to meet up with four amazing teachers; Linda Raleigh, Sandra Greenman, Vicki Parker and Terry Layfield. The five of us learned to dissect a pig’s eye (in order to understand the vision system better- not just for kicks), attended Friday and Saturday night classes together, took the ExCet tests for Braille and Vision beside each other, and created our own puppet show featuring the makings of the visual system. Meeting these incredible ladies would be one of many blessings for how teamwork creates power, strength and passion for making a difference in a child’s life.

In Mesquite ISD, I am fortunate to work with an amazing vision team: Jamille Smith, Karen Clay, Harriet Hall, Kandice Burke and Amanda Bowdoin.

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In my opinion, what makes our vision team and students successful is how we play up to each other's strengths.

Karen is masterful with technology and high school children, Amanda is a creative Brailist (making our lives so much easier), Jamille, a reading expert teaching our students fluent Braille reading as well as Language Art Skills (one is now in a gifted and talented program with a 4.0).

Harriet Hall is our orientation and mobility specialist; kind, focused and who teaches children how to function in daily life- now and later in life. Students who are fortunate to be with Ms. Hall, know they will be independent successful adults.

Kandice and I enjoy working with babies and children with multiple disabilities. Frequently, we have gone out to classrooms and homes together deciding on ways for the children to be successful and to have the best quality of life.

In short, when a team comes together, celebrates and uses the individual strengths of the team, children are the ones who reap the benefits of a passionate and cohesiveness vision team.

Pictures from the Road

By Sandra Greenman

One of the joys of being an itinerant teacher is to expect the unexpected. Driving the roads of the Region 10 area you never know what you will see on the journey from school to school.



Somewhere between Ennis and Italy, Texas



Attempting to do an FVE/LMA on my friend!

Please send photographs you would like to share with the group to: [Sandra Greenman](#), Newsletter Editor

Captions or brief narratives to go with your photos are welcome and appreciated.

Region 10 ESC

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[Like us on Facebook!](#)



Address: Spring Valley: 400 E. Spring Valley Road, Richardson Texas 75081

Region 10 Education Service Center is one of 20 regional service centers established by the Texas State Legislature in 1967 for the purpose of providing services to the school districts within a defined geographic region. Regional service centers are non-regulatory, have no taxing authority, and provide services for which participation is voluntary on the part of the local school district. Region 10 Education Service Center, located in Richardson, provides services that impact more than 750,000 students and 65,000 educators in 80 public school districts, 41 Charter Schools, and numerous private schools in the 8 counties (and portions of a 9th) in north Texas that comprise the Region 10 Service Area.

ECC Events 2015-2016

- ◆ **October 16 & 17, 2015** Sports Extravaganza for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- ◆ **November 6, 2015** Babies' Day Out
- ◆ **November 14, 2015** Bowling in Your Spare Time
- ◆ **January 30, 2016** Looking Good, Feeling Fine: Business Edition
- ◆ **March 25-27, 2016** Building C.A.M.P.
- ◆ **April 8, 2016** Technology Olympics

It is the policy of Region 10 Education Service Center not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Region 10 Education Service Center will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational programs and services.

You will find more information and links to registration forms on our website at: [Region 10 ECC](#)
