“From the Director’s Desk” By: Beth Kennedy

DB Central staff members have been hard at work fleshing out the new project, updating the website, and collecting demographic information on the children and young adults who are DeafBlind across the State. We appreciate all efforts to make sure that our census information is up to date! See our summer issue for an updated county map.

Of course, we are also providing training and consultation services! We have conducted some onsite visits, but the bulk of our work is done using distance consultation strategies. Nicole and I have had several occasions to participate in meetings and consultation via conference call. Overall, we feel that it is as effective as being onsite, while saving travel time and money.

A few teams have tried accessing consultation services by submitting video clips, in lieu of an onsite consultation visit. Again, this has proven to be a very effective way to provide support to teams, while saving a great deal of travel time and money. In this issue, we have put together some information on the flip cams and webcams available for loan from the project lending library. We are also looking for additional ways to tap into technology in the provision of technical assistance/consultation. Please submit any ideas you might have!

Our main winter event, an adaptive winter sports workshop at Challenge Mountain, was cancelled TWICE due to lack of snow/warm temperatures. Given the weather that we endured in December, we never would have guessed that there would be a shortage of snow this winter!

I have other sad news- our secretary, Michelle Mazure, has decided to pursue further education full-time. Her last day at DB Central is March 20, 2009. We wish her the best of luck! If you, or someone you know, is interested in this part-time position, you can access an application online at http://cmich.edu/HR_Home.htm and clicking on “Job Opportunities” (at the top of the page).

To end on a positive note, Nicole Bruce, our Family Support Coordinator, is expecting a baby girl! Nicole is due to give birth to her third child in mid-May, and will be on maternity leave for six weeks after the baby is born. Please feel free to contact me while Nicole is away.
Distance Consultation Offers Opportunities to Professionals and Families Alike… by Nicole Bruce

In writing our latest grant proposal, we looked at ways to be more efficient and effective in our work with families and professionals. It is sometimes difficult and often costly to provide onsite consultation to individuals and teams across the state in a timely manner. After doing some research and talking with other consultation projects across the country, we decided to invest in some resources to help us provide distance consultation.

We are very excited to now offer, for loan from our library, Flip Video cameras and Logitech webcams. Each of these items are very easy to use and come with directions and software (when necessary). Families and professionals can borrow these items to record footage of activities and/or situations in which you would like feedback for ways to support your child/student, or to do live consultation sessions with Beth and/or Nicole. Webcams can also be used to send live footage of your child/student during a particular activity in which you have questions or concerns.

While doing distance consultation is a new endeavor for our project, we are very optimistic about the possibilities. Please feel free to call or email our office if you have questions or ideas as to how we can expand the use of these new lending library items. More information, as well as detailed instructions, will be added to our website soon!

Flip Video Camera:

Logitech Webcam:
Michigan Association for DeafBlind (MADB) is happy to host the MADB Spring Picnic on Sunday, May 10, 2009 in Mount Pleasant. The picnic will take place at the pavilion in Island Park in Mount Pleasant’s downtown district. Members of the MADB Board, along with attendees of the 2008 DB Central Family Retreat, decided to host a family picnic to help bring families together to socialize, network and have fun! This year, we will have the special honor of being joined by David Brown, a leading expert in the field of DeafBlindness, and a consultant for California Deaf-Blind Services. We will be celebrating with David as he will be awarded an honorary doctorate from Central Michigan University on Saturday, May 9th. Mr. Brown will also be delivering the commencement speech at Saturday’s graduation ceremony at CMU.

Info on David Brown:
Since entering the specialist field of deaf-blindness in 1983 David has become a leading and well-published practitioner in the field. In his roles as Head of the Family Education and Advisory Service of SENSE (the National Deafblind Association) in the UK (1982-2000), and as Education Specialist for California Deaf-Blind Services (since August 2000), he has worked with approximately 500 children and young people with deaf-blindness. David has also written training manuals for universities and other organizations as well as published many articles on a variety of topics related to deaf-blindness. (Bio submitted by David Brown)

What: MADB Spring Picnic  
When: Sunday, May 10, 2009  
Time: 11 a.m.– 3 p.m.  
Where: Island Park, Downtown Mt. Pleasant

R.S.V.P no later than April 10 to:  
Kelli Sabin, MADB Secretary  
11984 East Stanton Rd.  
Sumner, MI 48889  
Phone: 989-833-7765 (please leave a message)  
Email: kelli.sabin@hotmail.com

Accommodations:
A block of hotel rooms is being held at the Super 8 in Mount Pleasant (800.868.5252). All rooms are non-smoking and have two beds. Rooms have a special rate of $109.99, plus tax, per night. Families are responsible for making and paying for their own hotel accommodations. Unreserved rooms will be released on April 25, so book your room early! If you would like financial support to attend this event, please call or email Nicole Bruce at 888.758.0508, ext. 2 or nicole.bruce@cmich.edu.

Remember, this is both graduation and mother’s day weekend—rooms will go fast!
DB Central & MADB Would Like to Sponsor YOU!!!

DB Central and MADB would like to sponsor one family member to attend the NAPVI Families Connecting with Families International Conference in Costa Mesa, California this July. Complete the attached application (Page 5) by April 17, 2009 if you are interested in attending. Sponsorship will include airfare, hotel, meals and miscellaneous travel costs. While this is a family conference, DB Central and MADB can support only one individual to attend.

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments

Families Connecting with Families

International Conference
July 17-19, 2009
Costa Mesa, CA.

This conference is designed to meet many goals that support the growth and lifelong skills needed by children and youth with visual impairments. It will cover all aspects of raising and educating a child with a visual impairment. The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) will also provide a rich program for families of children who are deaf-blind. The conference will be important for the families of children who are deaf-blind, blind or visually impaired, or multiply disabled, and the professionals who work with them.

For more information visit http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitehome.asp?SectionID=91 or http://www.spedex.com/napvi/conferences.html. Be sure NOT to register for the conference prior to receiving a sponsorship award from DB Central.

Latest MSEMP Newsletter Now Available

Michigan Special Education Mediation Program has just released its spring newsletter. The newsletter, Reaching Agreement, includes information on:

- New dispute resolution procedures from the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education & Early Intervention Services that are nearing debut
- Training for Parents Around the State
- MSEMP results from FFY 2007-2008

Visit: http://files.e2ma.net/3609/assets/docs/v3n1-spring2009.pdf for the full publication.

Stimulus Bill & IDEA Funding

The final Stimulus Bill emerged on Friday, February 13. Overall, the bill will provide a major increase in special education funding, including $12.2 billion for IDEA.

A recent issue of the Special Ed Advocate by Wrightslaw includes detailed information on how this money will be spent. See http://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/09/nl.0217.htm, for the entire article.
DB Central/MADB Conference Scholarship Opportunity

Families Connecting with Families
July 17-19, 2009
Costa Mesa, CA

***Deadline for Applications is April 17, 2009***

Name:__________________________________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________________________________________

Phone:__________________________   Email:_________________________________________

Have you received a scholarship from DB Central/MADB in the past?
    If yes, how was the scholarship utilized?

Have you attended a Families Connecting with Families Conference in the past?
    If yes, where?
    If no, have you attended any other conferences?

Why are you interested in attending this conference? How do you think you will benefit?

If selected, how would you be willing to share the information you receive? (i.e. write a newsletter article, submit a summary to DB Central/MADB, meet to discuss conference highlights with DB Central staff and/or MADB board, etc.)

Submit this application to:
DB Central
Sloan 105
Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859
Fax: 989-774-1572
Sustaining Braille Proficiency

UMass Boston is proud to present our highly acclaimed web based curriculum "Sustaining Braille Proficiency". This independent, self-paced study is designed to address the ongoing need of dedicated professionals to maintain skills with the Literary Braille Code.

This carefully designed, self-paced, independent study features the exciting new NERCVE Online Drill and Practice Brailler, which allows six-key braille entry through the computer's keyboard, with immediate feedback assuring accuracy. Cost $195 (20 PDPs or 2 CEUs). To register: http://www.nercve.org/sbp/?page=SBPregistration

DeafBlind Central Training

If you or your office would like professional training please contact our office at 989-774-2725 or toll free at 888-758-0508. For more information on project services, visit the Deaf Blind Central website www.dbcentral.org.


For more information visit the website at: http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PolicyAdvocacy/CECPolicyResources/EconomicStimulus/Stimulus_Q_A.htm

Early On® Michigan

MICHIGAN INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Parent Involvement Committee of the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC) is pleased to announce a listserv for Early On families in Michigan. The listserv will be open to families who currently have children in Early On, or whose children are “graduates” of Early On. The intent is to provide a forum for parents to connect with each other, share experiences, and mentor one another.

We would like you to help us spread the word of this listserv by sharing this information with Early On families you know. The listserv address is: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/earlyonmifamilies/.
UPCOMING EVENTS

March 16, March 30 or April 13, 2009
Planning for a Child’s Health and Education
For more information www.bridges4kids.org/f2f or call (800) 359-3722

March 18-20, 2009
MTSA’s 2009 Annual Spring Conference
Register at www.michigantsa.com

March 19, 2009
The Michigan Department of Community Health, Early Hearing Detection Program present the 2009 EHDI Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Lansing, Michigan. Register at www.eandt.mphi.org

March 22, 2009
Seedlings Braille Books Announces 22nd Annual Bowl-A-Thon for Braille Literacy sponsored by FORESTERS
For more information, call 734-427-8552 or download a bowling brochure on Seedlings’ website, www.seedlings.org.

March 23, 2009
Assessing Infants and Children with Special Needs Including Cortical/ Cerebral Visual Impairments.
Register at: http://www.solutionwhere.com/wayneresa/cw/main.asp or fax to: 734-334-1622 or email events@resa.net

March 24, 2009
Western Michigan University, College of Health and Human Services, Department of Blindness and Low Vision are pleased to present: A Savvy Swap Meet
For more information, email Monica Orsolini at monica.orsolini@wmich.edu or by phone at 269.387.8395

March 25, 2009
How to Access Mental Health Services for Your Child Using Public or Private Healthcare Coverage and Is Your Teen Ready for Adult Life Workshops
To register online at www.bridges4kids.org/f2f for for more information call (800) 359-3722

March 26, 2009
GIRESD’s Deaf/HH Program welcomes Singing Hand at the St. Louis High School Cafetorium at 6:30 p.m.

March 27, April 17, April 27, or May 4, 2009
Helping Families and Young Adults Protect Their Rights
To register online at www.bridges4kids.org/f2f or for more information call (800) 359-3722

April 1-4, 2009
CEC’s 2009 Convention & Expo in Seattle, WA
CEC’s 2009 Convention & Expo in Seattle, WA
For more information, please contact: amyd@cec.sped.org or visit CEC’s website at www.cec.sped.org.

April 15 - 17, 2009
38th Annual - Midwest Symposium on Therapeutic Recreation & Adapted Physical Activity
For more information or to register on-line at http://muconf.missouri.edu/midwest_symposium

April 20 - 24, 2009
HKNC Interpreter Seminar April 20 - 24, 2009
Come join us at our upcoming seminar for experienced interpreters new to the field of deaf-blind interpreting, April 20 – 24, 2009, “Touching Lives: Interpreting Techniques for the Deaf-Blind Population.” You may also register on-line at our website www.hknc.org  Hurry, time is running out for the April 6 registration deadline. If you have any questions please contact us at rthhknc@aol.com.

April 23-24, 2009
Annual MAER Conference  PLEASE CONTACT LYNNETTE NORTON at (313) 291-4625 or via email at nortlyn@comcast.net and she will work with you and the hotel to take care of those issues.

May 3-5, May 6-9, and May 8-9, 2009
WMU/MBAA Sports, Education Camps for Students with Visual Impairments
May 2-5, 2009 Junior Camp, 10-12 years old
May 6-9, 2009 Senior Camp, 13-16 years old
May 8-9, 2009 Michigan State Camps ages12 through high graduates (under age 19) who have attended a previous Sports Camp
If you have any questions please contact Paul Ponchillia at paul.ponchillia@wmich.edu or 269-278-7307

May 1, 2009
Rocketing Towards Success
One Day Workshop for Parents of Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm at the Wastenaw Intermediate School District. Cost is $10 per family. If you have questions contact Sound Support at (866) 595-5585 or marykane@umich.edu.

May 6-8, 2009
2009 Infant and Early Childhood Conference
Registration is available on our conference website located at www.ieccwa.org

June 14 - 18, 2009
Michigan Youth Leadership Forum
Michigan state University, East Lansing
For more information contact Bill Milzarski, at (877) 499-6232 toll-free

June 21 - 26, 2009
ASL Week, an intensive program in American Sign Language
Contact Sharon Meldrum at smeldrum@madonna.edu for more information

June 28 - July 2, 2009
2009 Annual Chromosome 18 Conference
For more information visit the website at http://www.chromosome18.org/Service/AnnualConference/2009AnnualConference/tabid/431/Default.aspx

June 28 - July 3, 2009
Family Week I
Deaf culture classes for parents will focus on the integration of the deaf perspective and hearing perspective into everyday family interaction. For more information contact Facility Coordinator at hei@desales.org or (517) 592-8218

April 18, 2009
FIRST MEETING EVER for families of children with Zellweger Spectrum Disorders (Peroxisome Biogenesis Disorders, or PBD) in DeKalb, Illinois
Register at www.ulf.org