

NO LIMITS



Newsletter for the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

From the Center

It is already fall. That alone is hard to imagine. We at the EBC have been so busy that months seem to disappear. It is an exciting time but also a time for serious reflection and thought.

In addition to adding program, classes and staff to work at the EBC and throughout the community, there are three big projects of great interest. First, we are busting at the seams and need to expand our facilities. Training programs, social activities, volunteers and participants are all too often competing for the use of the space. The Friends of Earle Baum Committee is actively involved with the plans and permit process to prepare for a new, 10,000 square foot building with training kitchens, manual skills/art room, a low vision clinic, a large meeting room and more. We are actively seeking funds for this project which are hard to find.

The EBC in collaboration with San Francisco State University will be hosting a two year, university master degree program in Vision Rehabilitation conducted by one of the best programs in the US from Florida State University. This combination distant learning and face to face teaching will begin in January, 2005. There are no professional training programs west of the Mississippi and the needs are great. The EBC is proud to be apart of such a grand effort to not only help people of our region but help make a big difference to people from all of California and beyond. The FSU program is funded by

FALL 2004

VOLUME 5

ISSUE 2

a Federal grant and will admit up to 20 qualified students. What a great feeling to not only train the participants but also, be instrumental in training the trainers for a better future.

Finally, the last big program is one I mention with very mixed emotions. The EBC has recently contracted with the Veterans Administration to provide services to blind and visually impaired veterans. Until now, those vets were served directly by the VA however, due to the number of soldiers who have lost sight fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan together with the ever increasing number of older adults losing their sight, the VA is finding it necessary to out-source some services. I cannot think of a better place than the EBC for people to adjust to sight loss with the amazing caring, mentoring and skilled trainers however, it is very difficult to deal with the realities of war.

All of these factors contribute to the need to expand our facilities ASAP. All help is welcome and much appreciated. Good ideas that can help the EBC achieve the goals are also appreciated.

In October, we will celebrate our Second Annual EBC Dog-a-thon. More information will follow. It is our only fundraising event of the year and based on last year will be lots of fun. If you are around on October 9, please join us.

Allan Brenner, Executive Director

Dog-A-Thon

On **October 9, 2004**, the EBC will celebrate its' 5th Anniversary with the **2nd Annual "Dog-A-Thon, A Walk for Independence"** fundraiser. Once again, people will register to attend with their pet dog, service dog, stuffed dog, pretend dog or without a dog. The day begins sharply at 9AM with a 2/3 mile walk to the EBC followed by a complete breakfast, a silent auction, dog games, children's play area, information and vendor booths, and more. In addition to the proceeds from the \$20 Registration fee in advance or \$25 on the day, we encourage everyone to use the Donation Forms to collect money from people not necessarily attending the event. Please consider using the Donation Form to solicit from others...we need lots of support to continue offering the extensive services and programs at the EBC. All forms are available from the EBC or online at www.earlebaum.org.

BOARD MEMBER WANTED

The Earle Baum Center of the Blind is seeking a qualified member to join our group. Representatives from Sonoma County are particularly encouraged to apply.

Applicants should be able to offer professional skills such as marketing, fund raising, grant writing, project management, public relations etc. Members of the blind community are strongly encouraged to apply, but visual impairment is not a requirement.

Interested parties are asked to contact Board Member Allan Brenner at 707-523-3222, or contact via email: abrenner@earlebaum.org

Automobile Donations

The EBC is seeking donations of good automobiles in good condition for transportation of our blind staff and volunteers. Perhaps the single biggest issue for most people who are visually impaired and blind is transportation, particularly in a region with very limited public transit. We have concluded that we need a small fleet of good vehicles along with good volunteer drivers so we can conduct home trainings and public presentations. If you are looking for a tax deductible donation for your safe car in good condition, know that it will be put to great use. Unlike most car donations, the vehicle will not be sold off in auction with a small percent going to the charity. We will directly benefit from 100% of your donation. So, if you are trading in your late model car, no longer drive and want to make a difference, consider donating it to the EBC.

Scholarship Funds

In addition to the Earle Baum Center Scholarship Fund, the **Redwood Empire CCB Chapter** also has a Scholarship Fund. Membership in the Redwood Empire Chapter of the California Council of the Blind (RECB) is not required. Contact Committee members for an application: Jeff Harrington, Larry Swenson, Larry Hall, or Bill Gillespie.

The RECB meets at the Earle Baum Center on the 3rd Friday of each month. If interested in joining, please contact Beryl Brown at 545-7642.

Family and Spouse

There is a Support Group that meets the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month from 12:45pm – 2:00pm. Conducted by Margie Donovan, VIST Coordinator for the San Francisco Veterans Administration, these meetings are open to **ALL Family's and Spouses** of Visually Impaired or Blind persons, **not limited** to only Veterans families.

My Story

In 2001 I was diagnosed as “legally blind” 20/200, with ARMC “Age Related Macular Degeneration.” This is the fastest growing and the largest eye disease of seniors.

No longer able to drive or read, I felt angry & frustrated and sought help in Lake County (I did not find it). I did not know where to turn. During a Laser treatment in Santa Rosa I mentioned this to my doctor who immediately gave me Beryl Brown’s card. Beryl was conducting support group meetings for the visually impaired at the Earle Baum Center of the Blind in Santa Rosa, California.

A phone call to the Earle Baum Center changed my life. Information came pouring in the mail showing me how I could have a satisfactory life despite my visual handicap.

- Braille & Talking Books/Library of Congress in Sacramento, CA.
- Dept. of Rehab. Blind Services Div.
- California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) for large number phones etc.
- PG&E for installation of tactile labels for stove, thermostat, etc.
- Banks, who provide large printed/raised line checks
- Earle Baum Center in Santa Rosa
- Catalogs & Products and more

As a retired physical therapist & caregiver, I felt the need to share my knowledge, so I started a support group for persons with low vision in Clearlake, CA. We now have over 80 persons who have attended meetings in the past three years. In 2001 & 2002, the Earle Baum Center gave a 10-week course in Clearlake and Lakeport on Adjusting to Vision Loss which was appreciated by many.

This county (Lake) has poor transportation for the home bound. Therefore we have started support groups in Lucerne at the Senior Center, and Clearlake Oaks

My Story, continued:

and Lakeport. At age 92, I am hoping Earle Baum Center will take on this responsibility.

Gunhild H. Brown
Lake County Support Group Organizer

OUT AND ABOUT

By Laurie Scardina

Our trip this time readers is not one I would hope to ever have to experience again, even though it had some pleasant moments. One crew member and I went to San Francisco to visit another beloved crew member in a nursing facility.

Our comrade is recovering from a stroke he had in mid June. Get well soon my friend. Being one of us who LOVES to eat, of course we included lunch in his dining hall. (Actually a not to bad salad bar!)

The subject this time however is the trip, rather than the destination. How many of us have had the experience of taking a LONG ride on the paratransit system? I am not one to give a negative review to anyone but, this time I must be up front with my readers and warn you. If you are going to take any trip on Paratransit, be prepared! Not just with the normal supplies (water, snacks, etc.); but for hazardous duty. Please, take a cushion, inner tube, or back brace.... (Ok, an exaggeration). You do need to be at least forewarned to take a couple of Tylenol. To say we had a bumpy ride is an understatement. To say bone rattling would NOT be an overstatement. What are the chances the transit department would consider getting the shock absorbers, or whatever they are looked into?? And let us not forget the rattle of the seats that are unmanned. A bolt here and there would not be a bad idea. Maybe some WD 40?

Surely I don’t have the answers, but I want to give our loyal readers a “heads-up” about their bottoms when contemplating a ride of any distance on the buses of our paratransit.

Till next time.....

Volunteers Wanted!

The Earle Baum Center is growing! Come and grow with us!. There are jobs for everyone inside or outside. Call now (523-3222) for an application (or see Laurie or Beryl at the center).

To maintain the status as a regular volunteer, we ask that you commit to a minimum of 4 hours per month. If a regular commitment is not something you choose right now, we are happy to have you volunteer for special events and activities such as our annual fundraiser – the **EBC Dog-A-Thon**.

SCHOLARSHIPS!

The EBC has a new committee focusing on scholarships. If you or someone you know is willing to contribute towards this fund, please contact the center. Substantial scholarships can be named in honor of a specific person. Any financial assistance is welcome.

If you are a person interested in participating in an EBC sponsored activity or class and need financial assistance, we would like to hear from you, please give us a call.

Contact information: www.earlebaum.org email: ebc@earlebaum.org

Tel: (707) 523-3222

Info line: (707) 636-2769

Fax: (707) 636-2768



**EARLE BAUM CENTER
4539 Occidental Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401**

**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Earle Baum Center was conceived and established by the blind to provide facilities and foster programs in such areas as education, technology, rehabilitation, health, fitness and recreation, to improve the personal, social and economic condition of the blind and vision impaired.