

NO LIMITS



Newsletter for the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

From the Center

I cannot think of a better place to be than the EBC in late spring and summer. It is gorgeous! Flowers are everywhere; lawns are green, trees lush and growing and on top of it all, after 5 years of operations, the grounds are starting to mature. Soon, we will hear the sounds of students playing beepball on our ball field that will complement the melodies of the singing group and percussion sounds of the drum group. Nor to mention the tap, tap of canes crossing the courtyard. Outdoors at the EBC is just marvelous and people are happy that this very rainy season is passed.

This edition of the newsletter is focusing in on some people of the Center. Even though we are fortunate to have great facilities and even need to expand them dramatically, it is still all about the people. I have never felt so fortunate than having the opportunity to spend time with such a great group of people including the clients and participants, volunteers, staff and other service providers. The humor and warmth combined with the sincerity, dedication, commitment and inclusiveness of the EBC Community is amazing. Thank you to all that make this place much more than an agency and service provider. It is no exaggeration to call it a community center.

Have a wonderful, comfortable and healthy summer.

Allan Brenner

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Message from the President

A few months ago, Allan Brenner brought a capital idea to the Board of Directors. He convinced the Board to approve a feasibility study. The idea was to determine what it would take to raise enough money to construct a brand new, state-of-the-art building on the EBC campus. This building would be used for classrooms and other services. Social and fund-raising events could also take place there. The Board approved the study and we learned that it might take a while, but the project is doable.

Between now and when we have enough money to begin construction, all of us will need to do our part to make the Center as widely known to the people of Sonoma and surrounding counties as possible. Thus, a vigorous public relations campaign will be undertaken so when we seek donations of money, the Earle Baum Center will be high on people's list.

What can you do? Speak highly about the Center to everyone you know. Do your best to use the skills and knowledge you acquire here. By your excellent example, the public will see the true value of the Center. This will help us raise the capital we need to make the idea of a new building into a reality.

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Presidents Message, Continued

On another matter, the Board of Directors would like your feedback. As the Center grows, the question arises as to whether Officers of the Board should be elected primarily based on their qualifications to lead. We are discussing the pros and cons of changing the Constitution and Bylaws of the Center to eliminate the requirement that the President and Vice President of the Board be blind. The rule that at least half the Board be composed of blind people will remain intact and the President and Vice President will still need to be voted into office by a majority of the Board. Please let us know your opinion. Send an email to tcan-dela@afb.net or leave a message at the EBC.

Thank you

The New Kid

By Lisa Gerhardt

Turning into the driveway at the EBC the day of my interview, I thought to myself – WOW how cool it would be to work on an “old farm” but it looks new? I felt good energy right away as I walked into the office and this kid, who appeared to be blind asked if he could help me. OK, this is not going to be like the usual job interview!!!!!! I introduced myself to Sean and he gave me a warm welcome. I was at ease immediately.

The interview was conducted in Room 4 by my manager Cathy and this man who did not seem blind, but he had a dog. He looked right at me during the thorough interview process. Allan was his name and now I was really confused.

The gift came when I was hired and I figured, I must be as special as these people seem to be if they like me!

I knew I had much to learn and looked forward to my start date.

My first week I received such an education; Blind etiquette, how to be a human guide, when to help and when to ask. I learned about closing the cupboards the hard way. Good thing Allan has a hard head! Yes so much to learn. Talking computers? Brailers?

I had so many questions. With the kind and gentle teaching I received from all the wonderful people that work and volunteer at the center I have a pretty good grip on it now. This is a happy place with so much to be proud of. My favorite things are....

1. Watching the dedication, kindness and fortitude of our teachers and all staff.
 2. The surprise of a sighted child observing our Tap Dancing class.
 3. The laughter and smiles that are always present.
 4. The wonderful success stories we all tell in our staff meetings.
 5. Feeling inspired by terrific volunteers
- Miracles happen here every day and I am so proud to be a witness.

Silent Auction Items Needed

We are looking to raise money for a huge new building and are looking at our fundraiser the Annual DogATHon Silent Auction to help with this project.

Some of the large items could be:

Time Share
Balloon Ride
Canoe Trips
Dog related Services

Remember the DogATHon will be October 8, 2005, with a walk from the corner of Fulton Rd and Occidental Rd to the EBC, with a pancake breakfast provided by the Montgomery Village Lions Club. Silent Auction, Dog Relay Races and games, Kids activities, and many booths of local supporters showing their wares...

The Folks at Earl Baum Center of the Blind—by Nelson

Without the help and kind and caring assistance of these folks many of us losing our sight would sorely be alone.

Two years ago early in the fall my partner read in the Santa Rosa PRESS DEMOCRAT'S Sunday paper a need for a yard work volunteer at the Center. Soon after I stopped in to see how I could fulfill that need. Cathy Lawson, at the drive-up window, was the first person I met. I liked Cathy from the get-go. She sent me on a short tour of the facilities and soon on I knew, liked and understood Jim Kreig. A few days later Pat Jefferson was out at the tool shed showing me how to use the riding lawnmower. Now who says first impressions are not important?

I have often found that ordinary people perform extraordinary tasks. This is, to be sure, the case at the Earl Baum Center. Cathy Lawson is the affable lady and the first one you encounter/hear upon entering the office door. Cathy seems to run the place administratively. A straight on approach with this lady is best and you will find she has a great sense of humor. Pat Jefferson is one of the most unassuming and genuine people I have ever met. Pat is the Gal Friday on the job and everywhere, except on Fridays. Pat is always ready to listen and help in any way she can. I value and appreciate her friendship.

I have to give a great deal of credit to volunteer Jim Kreig. From telling me how to stack my keys to giving me insight into small yet significant daily clues on how to cope with my newly limited vision, Jim makes it seem easier. I always learn something from talking with Jim.

One of the most up beat people I have ever met is Instructor Denise Vacil. De-

nise is always up, enthusiastic and concerned. Although Denise must meet and know many, many folks she always remembers me. I learned so many useful skills and ways of coping with my new world I will forever be indebted to Ms. Vancil.

Jeff Harrington, in his own little jail cell complete with bars on the windows, also possesses an amazing upbeat attitude for all he has been through. Jeff is always joking yet most professional and his keen wit certainly aids his vast knowledge of computers and technology to assist all those with limited vision.

Leslie Bailiff showed me how to carefully navigate my neighborhood and beyond by teaching me white-cane skills. She, too, is patient and understanding.

Then there is Jennifer Frazier. Having first met her husband Dan, I actually knew about Jennifer long before I met her. My first encounter with Jennifer was at a barbecue lunch where we excitedly discussed one of the Harry Potter books we had both read. Dear Jennifer has the task of teaching many of us how to type all over again and in particular how to use this crazy keyboard to find ever'thang'! My hat is off to you Jennifer for having the patience to put up with me.

Our new Chefe do Volunteers, one amazing Beryl Brown is a true lady in every sense of the word. Recently I heard her dulcet tones wishing me Happy Birthday on the phone. What a wonderful gesture. I have spent many hours sitting next to Beryl and she is always, no matter how early or late, kind and considerate. I do so appreciate Beryl's witticisms on life.

Ilene Mattison-Shupnick is the lady that helps so any of us. She is our go between for the State of California Rehabilitation Blind Services and the Earl Baum Center. It is always amazing how effectively requests are met

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The 2005 Luther Burbank Rose Parade and Festival was a huge success—it's theme being Reels to Roses, our entry depicted Descriptive Videos and SAP formats.

A float of “movie-goers” enjoying the popcorn and DVS movie ‘Babe’, while waving to the welcoming crowds!



The EBC Staff got involved in parading ahead of the float with canes and dog guides to the delight of the parade watchers.

Photos by Lisa Gerhardt

Drummers from EBC met up with Patricia Hatfield's students from other classes in Julliard Park to drum and entertain the crowds. What a pleasant day it was to sit and drum under the red-wood trees in the beautiful weather! A perfect end to a perfect parade!



Congratulations to all on winning a 2nd place trophy!

EBC WINS BIG IN THE ROSE PARADE

The EBC group waited in special anticipation in our special staging area for the start of the Parade. Our banner holders were in line, our mixed group of sighted; blind marchers with guide dogs, canes, a wheelchair and smiles were behind them, and then came our fabulous float (we called it that!) A very cherry antique red truck pulling a trailer decorated with flowers and full of more EBC participants. Since the theme was Reels to Roses, we wanted to educate the community on how the blind and visually impaired are able to enjoy watching movies and TV. SO our presentation was about Described Video and SAP (second audio programming for television). We had a big TV screen showing a described video and our people ate popcorn while sitting on bales of hay. The whistles blew, the motorcycle officers began their maneuvers, the marching band started their drums and we were off! The whole group waved and whooped and laughed and loved the response from the enthusiastic crowds filled with smiles from kids of all ages.

As the parade ended at Julliard Park, amidst a throng of festive parade watchers, the group moved to the EBC Booth where Pat Hatfield's drummers were making musical magic with the chants and drumming under the redwood trees. Lots of people stopped by the booth during the afternoon to see what we are all about, those who knew us and thanked us for all the great work we do, then even more after the announcer said we took 2nd place for our division! Sean was elected to pick up the trophy and have his picture taken, to a robust round of applause from the crowd.



Thanks to Pat Jefferson, who coordinated it all AGAIN, Hank Hilsmann, driver extraordinaire, who generously donated his time and beautiful truck to the event, and all the participants who decorated, walked with the float, and those who endured sitting in the hot sun on scratchy hay bales!

Another great day, and huge success! We get recognized more each time we have a show of presence!

EBC Teachers Wish List

Are you spring-cleaning your home? Do you have any of the following items that you are not using? The teaching staff at the center would love to provide the best training possible and any of these items will help us with that goal. Thanks in advance!

- Talking Glucometer-Spanish preferred
- Closed Circuit TV's
- Video camera
- ID Mate
- Plex Talk
- FM system
- Labeler
- Ott lights
- USB storage device
- CD Stomped- To label CD's
- George Forman Grill
- Late model computer (IBM)
- Hairdryers-To change cane tips

If you don't have any of these items, but would like to donate money toward their purchase, contact the Earl Baum Center—523-3222.

when channeled through Ilene. You ask; you receive. Ilene always returns her phone calls and is most pleasant and professional.

Geoff Perel is also a great asset to the Earl Baum Center. Geoff, too, is a get-things-done kind of man. Geoff's skills and acumen are equally highly regarded.

The atmosphere, care and joy is certainly created by all these folks at The Earl Baum Center of the Blind in West Santa Rosa. They are all highly skilled in working with others. I am deeply appreciative.

'30 the lawnmower man

TECH DEPARTMENT

By Jeff Harrington, Manager Tech Dept.

The world of technology is constantly growing, and EBC's Tech Lab is following that trend. Back in February of 2001, when the tech center first opened, there was 1 donated computer, 1 training room & 1 staff member. Presently, there is 7 computer stations, 3 training rooms & 4 staff members in the department.

This gives me the opportunity to introduce our newest staff member Jacques Law, who's title is Technical Services Specialist. Jacques brings skills, experience and a positive demeanor to the department. He studied Computer Systems at Empire College and graduated in 2002 with a specialized Associates Degree. Jacques was born in Campbell California and moved to Sonoma County in 2000. He is bilingual English & Cantonese.

The many roles that Jacques will perform include: on-site & center based equipment assembly/repair/training; maintaining the network & server, updating the web site and driving for other tech staff. Jacques will be closely involved with our low vision clients providing them with comprehensive services.

"I got my APS" Accessible Pedestrian Signal

By Cathy P.

I live near an intersection that was almost impossible to cross while using my long cane or my new dog guide, Hedda. This is the "T" shaped intersection at Middle Rincon Road and Highway 12. I have walked way out of my way or not crossed the street because there is no safe way to negotiate this street crossing without a sighted person to assist.

In my efforts to get the Accessible Pedestrian Signal (chirp chirp and coo coo) installed I waited over 2 years and made a number of calls to Cal-Trans and the City of Santa Rosa. After repeated calls and nagging, the Earle Baum Center staff got involved and wrote letters to help the process along.

Well, after a long wait "I got my Accessible Pedestrian Signal installed" and when I heard it for the first time I literally danced on the corner. I wanted to let people know that perseverance, not getting frustrated, and pressure is what made it happen. Remember you can make a difference in your community. I want to thank Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Sprinkle and Mr. Jones who are a few of the important people who helped to get the device installed.

Now I can walk up to the intersection and safely cross independently using my dog guide, to get my Turkey burger and frosty.

Time for a celebration!

CCTV Loaner Program

We are proud to say we now have 33 CCTV's in clients homes from our Loaner Program. Currently, there are 10 people on our waiting list, with more and more requests weekly. If you have a CCTV that you are no longer using please consider donating it to the EBC Loaner Program.

The Baum Experience

By Sean Ryan

Friday, January 17, 2003 6:45 am:

Waking up to the alarm clock buzzing on the night stand near my head, I open my eyes to see how much time I had to wake up- only to find out that I can't see out of my left eye.

For some odd reason I thought it would go away, but it didn't. I went to work and started my job and even drove my boss to pick up the install truck from the shop. I sat down at my computer and couldn't see the screen.

That's when I lost control. My girlfriend picked me up and drove me to the emergency room. After seeing 3 different doctors they sent me to see a retina specialist where he had to do surgery right away.

The hard thing for me is not having control of my life. I had to make sure that I was always with someone to help me with monitoring my blood sugar and doing my insulin injections. I was forced to tag along so I could get places, not to mention the number of friends I lost contact with. I had to rely on holding my girlfriends hand so I could walk around. It was especially hard when all the family I have, moved out of the county.

At first that devastated my hope, but for me, that was one of the things that made me as strong as I am today. With only the people that meant the most to me around now I have what I need to continue on. I thought that there had to be a better way.

My doctor told me about the Earle Baum Center and said that with all my computer experience I should go and check it out. So in July of '04 I came and met with an odd fellow that was walking around with a cane and was about to give me a tour of the campus...wait, wait!! wait!!! How is a

visually impaired person going to give me a tour? after a couple of wise words and a chance to see "us" in action, Allan told me, "You have what it takes now to go in the direction that you want."

When I left that day I felt like the weight of the world had fell off my shoulders and into the palm of my hand.

Two years later and 11 operations I find myself completely blind but my eyes are wide open. I feel as if I can actually see my future or at least have a sense of direction. Now I am more involved then I ever thought I would get in anything. I have never met as many nice and caring people as I have at the Earle Baum Center. I feel like I still have family here and have people, I mean friends that I can relate with. Remember that whatever faith you have, it doesn't change just because you can't see it.

So to all the partials and the black outs out there, keep your head up and remember that you don't need sight to see the light.

DANCE, DANCE, DANCE!

Start your summer off on the right foot! A new exciting ballroom dance program will begin here at the EBC. Classes will include the basic steps for 6 popular ballroom dances: Tango, Waltz, Rumba, East Coast Swing, Cha Cha Cha, and Salsa. Classes are taught by dance instructors who specialize in teaching individuals with visual impairments. This 6 week fun-filled course will begin Tuesday June 14 at 4:00 to 5:30. p.m. The cost for the 6 week class is \$72. A minimum of 12 dancers are needed, so tell your friends. No experience is necessary and all are welcome! To sign up or for further information contact instructors: Denise Vancil (707) 284-6973 or Gene Russo (510) 501-4713 .

Announcements

The two-year, **Florida State University Vision Rehabilitation Master's Degree** program at the EBC began in May

SPANISH Lessons, began in May

Rose Parade—EBC received a 2nd place Trophy for Non-Profit Novelty Group

No Veterans Meeting July, 8/11 or 9/22

SINGING GROUP FORMING
Thursdays 1-2pm Room 3
Call for info

Upcoming Events

BBQ's 1st & 3rd Fridays at NOON, \$6
PLEASE RSVP

TANDEM BIKE RIDE—August 27th
Meet EBC @ 9:30am
Ride @ 10:30am
Lunch @ 12:30pm

DOGATHON
October 8, 2005
Call for Pledge Forms

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.