

# NO LIMITS



## Newsletter for the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

### From the Center

As I am writing, I hear the sound of a tractor outside the window of my office...soon to be my former office. Our new office building is in the final stages of completion and with any luck, will be in use by the time this newsletter is distributed. The new office building will give us much more space in which to conduct business than the small two bedroom house in which Earle Baum and his sister lived until their deaths. The farmhouse will become a Volunteer and Visitors Center with a volunteer office, lounge, lunch room and more. This change will allow us to have a special place for guests, volunteers and program participants to spend time. This is just another phase of the evolution of the Earle Baum Center.

In the midst of this construction project, we have a major capital campaign in development, looking for significant financial donations and community leaders willing to assist with their personal resources and connections. Once the 3 million dollars has been raised, we will construct the large building that we have discussed in the past. This will give us the facilities to expand many programs and services to our vastly underserved population.

Equally important and more immediate, we need to build resources that will help us fund programs that will meet our needs for the near future. To that end, I am very pleased to announce that Ms. Jean Schulz

SUMMER 2006 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1



### EBC Administration Offices

"We're almost there. The concrete walkways have been poured, the electrical connections made, the fire sprinklers are in and the doors and windows are completed. Floor coverings and furnishings are next.

**Can the ribbon cutting be far away?"**

---

### California Primary Election

The Secretary of State's office has announced that large print ballot pamphlets are available for the upcoming June primary election. Large print ballot pamphlets can be requested by contacting the Secretary of State's Elections Division at 916-657-2166 or online at [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_lgprint.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_lgprint.htm). They will also be distributed to select libraries, as well as community centers that serve senior citizens and independent living centers throughout the state.

(wife of Charles Schulz of Peanuts fame) has offered to help the EBC establish our first endowment fund. Jean has offered a matching grant of \$25,000 and as soon as we match this figure, we will establish the endowment. With this endowment, money can be donated that will last in perpetuity and assure our legacy of a healthy and successful organization.

Why are we pushing so hard to construct new facilities and build a stronger financial base? Over the past year, the demands for our programs and services have been growing dramatically and the "system" is less and less equipped to fund these demands. We are facing a huge increase in those losing sight due to age related causes. Currently, the EBC receives a Federal Grant through the State Department of Rehabilitation for \$125,000 per year to provide independent living services to adults 55 and older. The grant is intended to cover services for all "seniors" in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino Counties and funds one part-time professional teacher, one part-time para-professional teacher and a range of support services. Clearly, it is not possible to serve thousands of potentially eligible people with just two part-time teachers. Thus, we need to begin finding ways to serve people without the support of the government. I hope that by putting an endowment in place, we will begin the process of finding a long term solution.

Now, for some of the changes in our EBC family. Canaan Richards, one of our Orientation and Mobility Specialists, recently delivered Noah, a beautiful boy. And to outdo Denise Vancil, our Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, she went into labor one day before she was scheduled to go onto maternity leave. Denise waited a few hours after leaving the EBC for maternity leave before going into labor. Next, it is Leslie Bailiff's

turn. Leslie is due in August but will be leaving the EBC on June 9. She and her husband are moving to their new house in Sacramento and Leslie will be a stay at home mom. We all will really miss Leslie and we wish her the very best. And yes, another change. Amy Brody began teaching Orientation and Mobility for us in May as a full time instructor. We are very excited to have Amy on board.

A final thanks to all of you who have been so important to the past success of the Earle Baum Center and whose continued support serves as an inspiration to everyone here. We are all a part of one terrific EBC community.

**Allan Brenner  
Executive Director**

---

## Growing with the Need

**Phil Swetin, Development Director**

It is hard to turn on the radio or TV or pick up a newspaper without another reminder about the aging of our population. As Northern California becomes a retirement destination for more and more Americans, the health of the Baby Boomers continues to affect the quality of life of us all. Today, about 3.5 million Americans aged 40 and over are currently blind or visually impaired. That number is projected to reach 5.5 million by the year 2020 and surpass 7 million within 25 years. With the incidence of low vision and blindness significantly increasing with age, people 80 years of age and older currently make up about eight percent of the population, but account for 69 percent of blindness.

The human cost is mind boggling but the economic costs are equally staggering. Direct medical costs in 2003 including doctors' visits, surgery, drugs, hospital and

(Continued from page 2)

home care exceeded 48 billion dollars with no relief in sight. Indirect costs, including lost work time and the inability to care for the home added another 19 billion dollars.

While the costs of medical research and treatment continue to grow unabated, the Earle Baum Center, along with many allied organizations, is continuing to work to ease the economic burden of the indirect costs. In 2003, less than 700 million was spent nationally on rehabilitation services and equipment, but each dollar spent represents a movement toward independence.

Our staff is working on a daily basis to make independent, productive living a reality for many Northern Californians.

Every individual who is able to remain independent in their own home through living skills training, every person who is able to navigate their environment with the help of orientation and mobility training, every person who can now read a book, use e-mail or cruise the internet through technology training and adaptive devices not only strengthens our community and brings dignity to us all, but pays a big economic dividend.

Support of the programs at the Earle Baum Center is an investment in all of our futures. Many of us will be fortunate not to suffer from vision impairment, but none of us will be untouched as our friends, neighbors and relatives lose vision to aging, accident and disease. Whether as a donor to one of our ongoing programs or with a gift to our matching grant endowment fund, your support will continue to pay dividends to our entire community.

## Meet the Board - Part I

### The Board President

Aerial Gilbert is the current President of the Board of Directors having been elected to the Board prior to the EBC's opening in 1999. With her Guide Dog Hedda by her side, Aerial serves as Outreach Manager for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Working with adults and families of blind children to develop a relationship with the Guide Dogs staff, volunteers and donors, she promotes the Guide Dog lifestyle through organizations and consumer groups connected with vision loss.

In addition to her Board duties, for the past 5 years Aerial has spoken about the choice of a Guide Dog at the EBC's Adjusting to Vision Loss classes. Ae-



rial has a background as a Registered Nurse in pediatrics and most recently served as the director of volunteers at Guide Dogs headquarters in San Rafael where she managed a vibrant group of 500 volunteers. Aerial is an active participant on the U.S. national rowing team and competes internationally in the sport with the goal of participating in the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing.

Aerial believes that "***the Earle Baum Center is one of the greatest gems of Sonoma County, and an inspirational model for blind and VI throughout the country. I am very proud to enlighten others about the Center and what it offers.***"

# 2006 Luther Burbank Rose Parade & Festival

## “Friends Helping Friends”



Allan Brenner, Fontina,  
and Ken Rossi



EBC Staff and Friends



EBC float with Pat Jefferson,  
Beryl Brown, and Yvonne  
Huddleston learning Braille



Devin can't get enough seem to get any attention from parents Denise Vancil and Ben Karpilow!

**EBC Board Member Shannon Barker, with a very happy Gwen gleefully watching her first parade!**



Passing the Judges Reviewing Stand



Jennifer Frazier,  
son Jack and  
Jeff Harrington  
meet Devin!



Laurie Scardina and Ken Rossi carrying the EBC Banner to lead the group

## **Support for Sighted Partners**

When your partner becomes visually impaired, both of you are likely to feel overwhelmed by new adjustments. If you are the sighted partner, you may not pay attention to the impact on you. After all, it is your partner who has the vision loss.

Please keep in mind that you are also affected by the change in circumstances and deserve support and information as well.

You may experience many emotions as you begin to cope with the impact of your partner's vision loss. Feelings of anger can get in the way of your relationship, especially if they are not accepted or understood. Guilt may arise when you forget that your partner can't see something or when you can't meet a request. You may notice changes in the balance of giving and receiving in your relationship. While responsibilities may shift, both of you need to feel that you are contributing to the daily tasks, decisions and to your relationship.

Support groups at the Earle Baum Center can help you adjust to these changes. Our "Friends and Family Support Group" provides a just for you opportunity to share your concerns, fears, and frustrations in a confidential environment. This ongoing group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month from 12:45-2 PM and is facilitated by Margie Donovan, Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator from the San Francisco VA. For more information call us at 523-3222.

## **Free Movies for Seniors (60+)**

### **Roxy Stadium 14**

85 Santa Rosa Ave.  
(next to Transit Mall)

1st Thursday of the month 9:30 AM.

For show info, call the Roxy at 522-0330, x2, or call Gwen at 523-1586, x21

## **Get Fit!**

Just a reminder! The Earle Baum Center offers a fitness and exercise class every Monday and Thursday from 11 AM until 1 PM under the instruction of Laurie Scardina. Work out on a treadmill, stationary bike or the universal weight machine. We also have chair exercises, stretching, aerobic dance and much more. Make new friends while you get improve your health. Reap the benefits of increased stamina and improved balance. AND it is just plain fun! Laurie will work with you to adapt a routine to your specific needs. Call 523-3222 for more information or to make your appointment to get started.

## **Denise Vancil Honored**

Denise Vancil, a Vision Rehabilitation Therapist with the Earle Baum Center in Santa Rosa, has been recognized as **Outstanding Rehabilitation Worker** by the Northern California Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The award was presented in a ceremony on May 5 at the Orientation Center for the Blind in Albany, California. AER provides support and assistance to professionals working in all phases of education and rehabilitation of children and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Denise was the first instructor employed at the Earle Baum Center which opened in 1999. Denise holds a degree in Recreational Therapy as well as a Masters Degree in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. In addition to teaching classes in Independent Living Skills and Braille, Denise also inspires and motivates her many students with her dance classes.



EARLE BAUM CENTER  
4539 Occidental Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND

**MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired to improve and enrich their personal, social and economic lives.



memorative "leaves" can be purchased with names engraved. Please call the EBC to get the details of this Tree of Life Memorial.

The Earle Baum Center has a Tree of Life Plaque to acknowledge loved ones, and provide a lasting memory. This is a great way to honor special occasions and help the EBC. Com-

**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
**Introduction to Vision Loss**  
**July 12th—Sept 27th**  
**Wednesdays**  
**9am—11am**

**BBQ's**  
**1st & 3rd Fridays**  
**Please RSVP**

**DogAThon Oct. 14th**  
**Save the Date!**

**Contact information:** [www.earlebaum.org](http://www.earlebaum.org)

**Tel: (707) 523-3222**

**Fax: (707) 636-2768**