



Newsletter of the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

From the Center

The issue of sight loss and blindness is becoming more widespread and complex as our population ages. Not too many years ago, conditions like Macular Degeneration were unknown. Today, many older adults not only know of the disease but also have concerns of developing it. This is also true for Diabetic Retinopathy, cataracts, etc. Some are preventable, or have cures or medical procedures that can improve sight. Others do not.

When one is diagnosed with a disease that results in sight loss, after facing the fear and often dread, it is very important to learn how best to live with the condition so we can plan our lives wisely. There are two distinct approaches to dealing with sight loss. The "medical model" deals with disease and illnesses, attempting to cure or stop the progress of the condition with medicines and treatments. However, most eye diseases have no cures. When there are no effective medical answers, the best course of action is the "rehabilitation model", learning ways to deal with the loss and how to live a productive and fulfilling life. It may seem daunting, but many millions of people who have faced the challenges and successfully learned different ways to achieve their goals have learned that sight loss does not have to be devastating.

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That is where the work of the EBC comes in. The Earle Baum Center serves a large geographic region, covering 10,000 square miles over more than six counties. As a small organization, the challenge of providing training and support to such a large area appears to be never ending. Besides the obvious funding issues, we find ourselves juggling staff and schedules to accommodate these needs. When available, we utilize qualified volunteers to fill in some of the gaps. Yet, the services of the EBC are always first rate and the commitment of those involved is stunning.

Beyond the reach of the EBC, there is a much bigger picture. From coast to coast, far too many people are not receiving service. Today, a collaborative effort of private, non-profit agencies throughout the United States is trying to make sure that people are offered quality visual rehabilitation opportunities, regardless of where they live. I am very proud that the Earle Baum Center is playing an active, leadership role in this effort. Even though regional cultures and perspectives may vary, the core training and understanding of sight loss universal. These collaborating agencies, serving people of all ages and conditions throughout the field of vision rehabilitation, have begun a huge effort to reach people in need anywhere, with the goal of offering the highest

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quality professional training and services. In addition, this organization, the National Council of Private Agencies of the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCPABVI), is determined to ensure that the professional perspective of training is heard and understood and member agencies speak with one strong voice to the government, medical community and other service providers. Today, there is a national, toll free telephone number and a web site that can be used to refer people to local agencies throughout the country qualified to provide the training and opportunities. Information is available by phone toll free at (866-) 645-2449, or on the web at www.agenciesfortheblind.org. If you know anyone in need of vision rehabilitation service and they are not familiar with a local organization to serve them, there is now a reliable source of referrals. Most services are offered free or without significant cost to the consumer. We at the EBC are committed to assuring that no one losing sight will feel alone.

On a very personal note, I want to share some sad news. I will sorely miss seeing those big brown eyes that followed me with adoration and concern, the unquestioning dedication and enthusiasm and great companionship that are lost with my first guide dog Fontina's passing. She shared 10 of the best years of both my life and my wife Christina's life and leaves a large void. It would take hours to tell all the stories of her remarkable career and unique adventures that few dogs, no less people, have had the opportunity to enjoy.

Providing for Future Generations

In 1911 Earle Baum graduated from Wright District School which had been built by his grandfather 48 years earlier.

Seeing With Her Heart

If it is part of the EBC ethos that once you come to the Center, you are a family member forever, then there is no better example than Pat Jefferson. Pat, a jeweler by profession, first came to the EBC in January of 2000 seeking services for her mother. Before long, Pat was one of our most dedicated volunteers and in 2002 joined the staff as a general assistant, driver, landscaper, handyperson, tour guide...



After completing specialized coursework and re-

ceiving field training, Pat now serves the EBC as a Vision Rehabilitation Assistant. Pat's primary focus is Sonoma and Napa County seniors, teaching our 10 week Introduction to Vision Loss classes, conducting seminars and setting up and facilitating numerous support groups. Attend any event at the EBC and you will surely find Pat at the center of activity, stepping up to volunteer for any job, regardless of the time or effort involved.

For Pat, the end of a class series seldom means the end of a relationship. Pat's commitment to her clients is always ongoing and exemplary, often maintaining contact by phone or by mail long after the client has left the program.

Whether mowing the field, demonstrating a magnifier to a new client or taking a group to the beach, Pat Jefferson personifies the mission of the Earle Baum Center, improving and enriching the lives of all those around her.

COPE-ing with Emergencies

A new and exciting program to help residents, families and neighborhoods prepare for and respond to emergencies has been established in Santa Rosa. Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) was started by Oakmont residents working with the Santa Rosa Fire Department and the Red Cross. The program includes developing individual response plans, maintaining individual emergency supply kits and outreaching to community neighborhoods.

Information on conducting a neighborhood census, organizing meetings, stocking supply kits, earthquake preparedness, and more, as well as additional details and guides for developing your own neighborhood COPE team are available from the City of Santa Rosa at (707) 543-3700 or on-line at <http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/>.

Everything's Coming Up Veggies

By Elizabeth Cooley

Holy Tomato! The plants are in, the irrigation system is installed and the Garden Club can wash off their hands and relax.



At the first meeting, tomatoes, a variety of peppers, onions, cucumbers, eggplant and an array of herbs were

chosen for the first planting. With the assistance of Master Gardener Bob Tiller (that really is his name), an automated drip irrigation system was designed and installed. The garden beds will soon be labeled both in print and in Braille. Anyone is welcome to join the club, or just visit the garden, located west of the administration building.

Larry Hall Honored as "Local Hero"

On April 25, the Sonoma and Mendocino County Chapters of the American Red Cross gathered to honor ordinary people with extraordinary compassion. The event



honors "local heroes" in 11 categories. EBC regular, Larry Hall received the award as "Workplace Hero."

Larry with EBC Drummers

An active volunteer in several organizations, the Red Cross describes Larry, who lost his sight at age four, as someone whose "upbeat attitude has removed barriers that might defeat someone else. His job encouraging blood donations to Blood Bank of the Redwoods gives him ample opportunity to make a difference to those who need blood, and to those who save lives by donating...He brings his compassion, support and joie de vivre wherever he goes, making him a hero in and out of the workplace." The EBC joins the Red Cross in saluting Larry Hall.

Home Alone?

"I'm Home Alone" is a program sponsored by Catholic Charities to provide regular brief telephone calls to persons living in Sonoma County. The free program serves anyone who is home alone and may be elderly, homebound, disabled or otherwise at risk. If you wish to register a relative, friend, patient or yourself for this service, contact Michele Osmon in Santa Rosa at 528-8712 or Phoebe Broderick in Sonoma at 939-8850.

Nutrition and the Eye

Green, leafy vegetables may be vital for good vision. The center of the retina, known as the macula, has a relative abundance of two protective pigments: lutein and zeaxanthin. These carotenoid pigments are found in leafy green vegetables such as spinach, kale, and collard greens. Macular pigment, essential to clear vision, is believed to protect the retina by both its antioxidant capabilities and by screening harmful wavelengths of light. Scientists believe that without this protective mechanism, the risk of developing macular degeneration rises significantly.

Rolling On

The first ride of the tandem biking group got underway in less than ideal conditions, with a foggy sky and cool temperatures.



By the time the group hit the Joe Rodota Trail, the sun was breaking out and the temperatures warming. With the onset of Sonoma County summer weather, the group is looking forward to warmer and longer rides. If you are interested in joining the group, call or e-mail the Center.

Batter Up

A new beepball team is forming at the EBC. If you are interested in being the next Willie Mays, or just want to have a great time, let us know and we'll save you a place on the roster.

Tech Club 3.0

We are now 3 meetings into the new technology club. By popular demand, the first topic was Vista, the new Windows operating system. The major topic was the UAC (User Account Control) security feature. Window-Eyes had released a beta version on the same day that Vista was released. Zoom Text and Magic had not yet released accessible software for use with Vista. Jaws had released a beta copy for the use with Vista, however the User Account Control had to be disabled in order to run Jaws.

The April meeting topic was the Freedom Box. The program was demonstrated and people were largely interested in the descriptive video feature, email, and accessible use of the Internet. Clarification was provided on the type of product that the Freedom Box is, after some confusion was expressed regarding whether the Freedom Box was software or is instead an Internet provider.

At the May meeting the topic was technical support and how to get it. Guidelines and suggestions were made on how to determine what type of technical support is required; assistive or mainstream. Discussion followed regarding various methods in which support may be obtained for assistive technology. An email list was sent to the Tech Users distribution list for individual use. Additionally, ideas for obtaining mainstream technology support were discussed.

New members and visitors are always welcome. To join, just drop in to the next meeting on Monday, June 4 at 9:00 AM, or e-mail Jeff Harrington at harrington@earlebaum.org.

Dogathon '07

walk 4 independence
e a r l e b a u m c e n t e r

Coming October 13, 2007

Spring in Sonoma County marks many beginnings. Here, at the Earle Baum Center, it means that the time has come to begin preparations for our 5th annual **Walk for Independence** celebration and fundraiser.



The day begins with a 2/3 mile walk followed by a pancake breakfast, and is highlighted by the **Dog-A-Thon**, an activity filled event featuring games for both children and dogs, vendor and community information booths, a Silent Auction, and tours of the facility and grounds. All registered participants receive a commemorative t-shirt with the event logo and our sponsors' names.

The October 13th **Walk for Independence & Dog-A-Thon** is both a fundraising event and a community celebration, increasing community awareness of services, programs and activities serving people who are blind or visually impaired throughout Northern California.



The success of the event depends on community involvement. There are many opportunities for volunteers to help us realize our goals. In addition to helping out with the fun and games at the event, we need volunteers to assist with

pre-event publicity, gathering pledges, contacting potential donors for the silent auction and assisting with pre-event logistics.

If you are interested in being part of the festivities, as a volunteer, a sponsor or as a participant, call the EBC at (707)523-3222 or e-mail Phil at swetin@earlebaum.org.



How Cool Can We Get?



Echoing the Rose Parade theme of “Life is Doggone Wild”, the Earle Baum Center presented an array of summer programs available at the EBC. Once again featuring Hank Hillsmann’s (Jennifer Frazier’s dad) classic pickup truck decorated in “Joe Cool” fashion, EBC staff and volunteers introduced the cheering crowd to our Garden Club, exercise and fitness class,

dance program, and other outdoor activities including hiking, kayaking and fishing.

Barb and John Potts along with Jennifer and Dan Frazier emphasized a more active lifestyle as they rode tandem bikes alongside the EBC marchers. All ages were represented, from those who enjoyed the parade from their strollers to some very active seniors.



As always, many of our group were accompanied by their four legged companions. Director Allan Brenner’s new guide, Delta, showed remarkable restraint at her first parade event, with the rest of the canine crew holding up well on the hot pavement. The Rose Parade and Festival, now in its 113th year, led by Grand Marshall Guy Fieri, ended at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds where numerous activities were taking place for families, along with a high school culinary arts “Iron Chef” competition.

Tree Planted in Memory of Melody M. Gaines-Weybrew

On Friday, May 18, the Redwood Empire Chapter of the California Council of the Blind gathered at the EBC to plant a cherry tree to honor the memory of Melody M. Gaines-Weybrew, daughter of Lillian Gaines. Lillian is an EBC regular and longtime CCB member. Pictured from left are Barbara Kron, Eric Smiley, Bill Gillespie, Larry Hall, Beryl Brown, Sharon Brown, Lillian Gaines, Linda Picton, Lucia Heinzl and Ron Recioni.



Upcoming Events

EBC at the Downtown Market
June 27, July 25, August 29

Friday Barbecues
June 1, June 15, July 6, July 20,
August 3, August 17

Walk 4 Independence-Dogathon 07
October 13

Call to volunteer or to make
reservations

Low Vision Support Groups

Mendocino County
Fort Bragg
Ukiah

Lake County
Clearlake Highlands
Clearlake Oaks

Sonoma County
Calistoga, Petaluma
Oakmont, Sonoma

Contact : Tel: (707) 523-3222 Fax: (707) 636-2768

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

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND



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MISSION STATEMENT

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