



Earle Baum Center

Serving People With Sight Loss

Volume 15, Issue 2 November 2015

JEFF HARRINGTON, OTR/L EBC MANAGER, TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Many of you know Jeff Harrington, our Assistive Technology Specialist Manager. Being the hard-working guy he is, chances are he has helped you out in some way. We thought you might like to hear his story.



Jeff was diagnosed with glaucoma at the early age of 13. Over a period of ten years, he had probably 40 to 50 surgeries to relieve excess pressure in his eyes. Unfortunately, those cuts create scabs, requiring yet another surgery.

For Jeff, the reality check came at age 23 when he began his first internship as an occupational therapist at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto—a ten-building compound. In trying to navigate new surroundings, he kept running into wheelchairs, IV stands, etc. He realized he had memorized his college campus so well, it had given him a false sense of security in his ability to maneuver.

He put his internship on hold for a year to learn cane skills but upon resuming work, realized even his newfound skills wouldn't allow him to function in a hospital setting with its many uncontrollable variables. He needed a facility where patients came to *him* and he needed someone to give him a chance. Jeff interviewed for internships and thought they went well but wouldn't hear back. Finally, an instructor gave him the hard truth, saying, "They don't want to be the people who fail the blind guy." Being Jeff, he persevered and finally found the right spot.

His first job was in Eugene, Oregon at a center for those with brain trauma, but he missed his friends and it just kept raining! When wet-guide-dog smell got to be too much, he returned home, subsequently marrying his college sweetheart Amy and welcoming daughter Megan (now 12) to the world. The home menagerie includes guide dog Lucas, cat Willow, and guinea pig Shaggy.

He worked at Goodwill Industries and for the Disability Service and Legal Center before coming to Earle Baum in 1999 as a volunteer. He was then hired to build what is now a highly successful technology program. As tech keeps changing, rapidly improving low-vision services, Jeff stays current, helping us level the playing field (as Ivor has done), to live the lives we choose.

And thank goodness we have Jeff. As he says, "Baby Boomers are aging and many will experience vision loss. I expect we'll remain very busy, changing lives through technology!"

***YOU being here for us today
Ensures WE will be here for you tomorrow***

WANTED



IPAD 3, iPhone 4S or newer, iPod touch 5th Generation, iPad Mini

EBC is embarking on a technology project that will get powerful mainstream hardware into the hands of our clients. Recent technology advancements, i.e. the Siri voice assistant, which is currently built into every iDevice, has been found to be invaluable to those with sight loss.

Did you know that simple voice commands can result in:

- ◇ calling a contact, setting an alarm & listening to voice mail
- ◇ creating, reviewing & deleting appointments
- ◇ reading, replying & sending a message
- ◇ getting directions, finding businesses & checking the weather
- ◇ playing desired music, identifying artist & songs

One of the largest barriers to this technology is affordability. The concept of an iDevice recycle program where pre-owned equipment is donated to EBC, refurbished and distributed to those we serve, is being proposed. Any device that is Siri capable would work for our purposes. A comprehensive training component would also be implemented, so are clients could fully benefit from this technology.

How you can help! If you have older Apple products, or know people that have older iDevices, **please consider donating them to EBC.** Devices can include the below hardware or their successors.

Donate your iDevices to the Earle Baum Center



Ivor Horsfall



Independent Entrepreneur

There's no doubt about it—Ivor Horsfall is an entrepreneur. Though visually impaired, he's a successful businessman, running his own vending business providing food services to San Quentin.

Ivor got his start 23 years ago via the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) run through the Department of Rehabilitation. A unique program begun in 1958, its goal is to help the visually impaired get a leg up in the food service industry. Through this program, you have the opportunity to be a sole proprietor with priority food service status on state and federal property.

Ivor highly recommends this program to those interested in being self-employed. It's not for everyone, he says, but if you want to be independent and can handle the responsibility that comes with it, BEP offers a way to earn a living wage. To get started, you attend school in Sacramento for about a year of classroom and on-the-job training.

Since Ivor already had a Bachelor's degree in hotel restaurant management and had owned a deli, he was able to skip the classwork and successfully complete the final exam. His first gig was a tiny spot in San Francisco. He rode the bus five days a week, working 10-12 hour days—for seven years. When an opportunity came up north of the bridge at San Quentin, he jumped at it, competing against many others to earn the winning bid.

Ivor now employs a small team of workers. Four days a week, someone shows up at his house to pick up the truck and Ivor. Together, they go to the warehouse, load the products, fill the machines, and return to the warehouse. Not all BEP owners are as hands-on as Ivor, who often repairs and stocks machines himself, but he believes it makes for a better business. By paying attention to the rotation of food and keeping expenses low, he optimizes profits.

Over the years, as Ivor's vision has worsened, he's relied greatly on Earle Baum for assistance in using adaptive equipment that helps him run his business. With help from Jeff and Jacques, Ivor has learned to run software and equipment that enables him to be independent, keeping inventories, placing orders, writing checks, and generally running day-to-day operations.

When asked about the Earle Baum Center, Ivor says simply, "I love Earle Baum. The staff is helpful and extremely knowledgeable. It's a fantastic resource for the North Bay."



XFINITY/COMCAST

Benefit the Low Vision and Blind Community

XFINITY COMCAST has three distinct features which benefit the low vision and blind community. These features are...

Voice guidance which provides customers with visual disabilities the freedom to independently explore thousands of TV shows and movies on X1. The feature "speaks" what's on the screen and includes details such as program descriptions to help customers decide what to watch.

Go to <http://www.xfinity.com/accessibility#> to watch a video to see how it works.

Voice control can be used to control your On-Screen Guide using voice commands. It includes basic navigation, tuning to channels, searching, browsing and finding program recommendations, and requires a microphone in your mobile device and the XFINITY X1 Remote app to use. To access voice control, select the microphone icon found in the bottom row of icons. You will then be prompted to speak a command. Visit XFINITY X1 Remote App: Voice Control for more information.

Sample voice commands:

Network/Channel

"Watch CNBC"
"Watch 819" (watch eight nineteen)
"What's on HBO? Yes, watch that."
"info"

Title Search

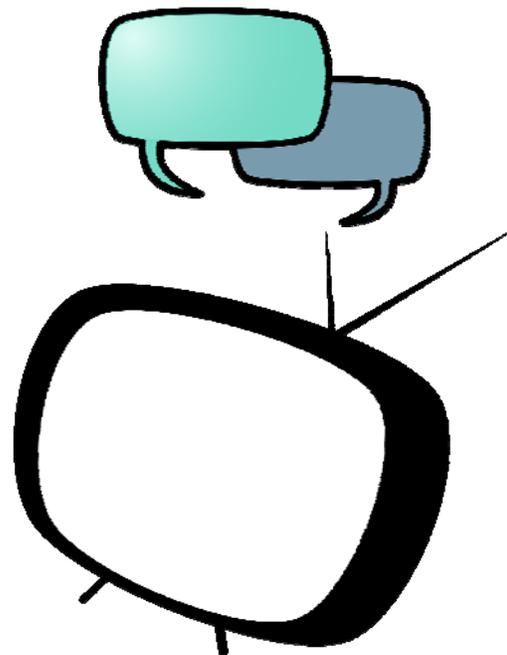
"Find The Voice"
"Search for Parks and Recreation"

Browse

"Show me all free action movies"
"Do you have any funny movies?"
"Filter by Free"
"Remove Free"

Team/Person Search

"When's the next Knicks game"
"Find John Ratzenberger" "Menu"
"Down three and select"
"On Demand"
"DVR"



Recommendations

"More like this"

"What's on?"

"What's on today at 8 PM?"

"Show me more movies like E.T."

DVR

"Record" (records what's airing now on the set-top box)

Guide

Video description refers to audio-narrated descriptions of key visual elements of programming inserted within natural pauses in dialogue. Video description makes television programs, feature films and other media accessible to people with visual disabilities, creating a richer, more independent experience. For example, video description describes key visual elements such as actions, facial expressions, costumes or scene changes in a program that a blind or visually impaired viewer would otherwise miss. Video description is available on any Comcast set-top box when made available by the programmer. For more information, including instructions on how to activate video description on X1 and non-X1 set-top boxes, please visit [About Video Description](#) for more information.

How to Benefit from these features?

You must have cable services from Xfinity/Comcast

Have an X1 cable box from Xfinity with the X1 Entertainment Operating System on it

X1 compatible remote control (you can purchase a large print remote control from Comcast's Accessibility Center of Excellence by calling 855-270-0379.)

What other benefits does Xfinity/Comcast offer for the low vision and blind community?

Don't get charged for technicians to come out for service or for making a payment over the phone

411 directory assistance for free (this is available to anyone in the low vision and blind community not just from Xfinity/Comcast)

Large print remote control from Comcast's Accessibility Center of Excellence by calling 855-270-0379.)

For further questions please call

Comcast's Accessibility Center of Excellence at 855-270-0379

**The next Tech Club meeting will be on Monday
February 1st from 11am to 12:30pm at the EBC.**

What's New with Windows 10



One of the standout new features found in Windows 10 is the addition of Cortana. For those unfamiliar, **Cortana is a voice-activated personal assistant**. Think of it as Siri, but for Windows. You can use it to get weather forecasts, set reminders, tell you jokes, send email, find files, search the Internet and so on.

There are two ways to use Cortana: **you can use voice commands, or you can type out your commands in the Start Menu**. If you choose the former, you may want to enable the “Hey Cortana” feature. With this on, you can say “Hey Cortana” out loud to trigger voice commands without pressing a button.

Here's how:

Search for “Cortana settings” in your Start Menu.

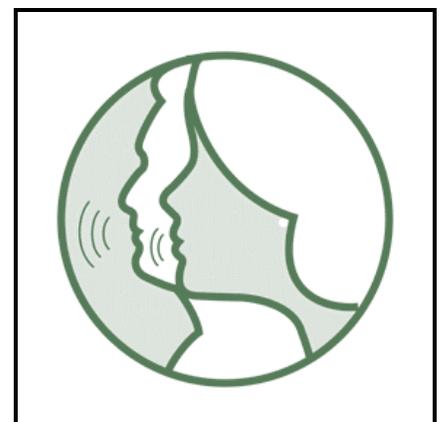
Enable the toggle under “Hey Cortana.”

(Optional) Under “Respond best”, you can choose “to me” to tailor Cortana to your voice. You'll need to perform a couple quick exercises to teach Cortana your voice. Otherwise, Cortana will work for anyone.

While Cortana works with voice commands, they're not strictly necessary. All of the commands we'll list here can be typed in as well.

What's the weather like? If you have location services enabled, you can ask this question to find out what the weather is like in your area. Alternatively, you can ask about the weather in a specific area to get the same information for any area.

- ◆ What's on my schedule?
- ◆ What is the status of my flight?
- ◆ How long will it take me to get to [place].
- ◆ Show me directions to [place].
- ◆ Create an appointment.
- ◆ Move my appointment.
- ◆ Set a reminder.
- ◆ Show me reminders
- ◆ Set an alarm.
- ◆ When is the next baseball game?





From the Center

It has been 16 years since we opened the doors at the Earle Baum Center and what a wonderful ride it has been. Thanks to Earle's generosity and dream of having his property become an educational and recreational center for those dealing with sight loss, many people with low or no vision have been helped to live a full and productive life. A true godsend, his 17-acre farm has become the special organization and beautiful facility we now enjoy.



Allan Brenner

Retiring after 20+ years as EBC CEO

Over the 20-plus years of my involvement, I have been so honored to be the leader. I am very grateful to have been gifted with the challenges and rewards of serving so many. During my tenure, I have lost virtually all of my sight, and yet my life has been enriched in many ways.

I only hope that others will recognize that devoting one's life to making a difference for others is the most satisfying role a person can experience. It is now time for me to step down and open the Earle Baum Center to new leadership.

I am pleased to announce that Dan Needham, our Chief Operating Officer, will become the Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2016. Dan has great talent, drive, values, and interest in making the EBC a better and stronger organization. He cares about those we serve and values the staff, volunteers, clients, supporters, and community. Please welcome Dan and do all you can to make his tenure as special as mine has been.

Over the years, I have spoken about the enormous challenges we have faced as a small and young organization struggling through some very trying times. I recently heard an interview with Bill and Melinda Gates talking about philanthropy and the need for much more focus on giving. Though we have no relationship with the Gates family (wouldn't that be nice!), we do have a relationship with you—the people who have seen firsthand the way the community benefits from our work. I love the expression, “Give ‘til it helps,” and I hope you will take it to heart, since you are our best hope for success.

The government and the “system” seem to have lost interest in supporting social services, particularly those assisting individuals with disabilities. Since opening our doors, the reimbursement we receive for providing skills training to those dealing with blindness is less today than 16 years ago. We have seen dramatic cuts in services to older adults (55 plus) and it's likely the trend will soon get much worse. I hope and pray that you and those in our community will understand that the Earle Baum Center is the only entity standing between isolated lives and those of independence and activity.

In recent times, we have watched our donations decrease while demand grows. To maintain current services and expand to meet the growing need, we need your support in a big way. You know and understand the importance of our work, and we need you to keep giving what you can and to become an ambassador for this Center out in the world.



Earle Baum Center



Serving People with Sight Loss

Here are some ways you can help make a real difference:



Make regular donations to the Earle Baum Center and the people we serve.



Speak to your financial adviser about including Earle Baum in your long-term giving plans. Bequests will likely be the vehicle that keeps us thriving.



Let others know that Earle Baum is a worthy organization that would use financial support wisely to serve people facing sight loss. We need to expand our base of support.

In my last few weeks as the leader of the Earle Baum Center, I hope to see a big jump in support. I want to leave Earle Baum in the best condition possible and I'm relying on all of you to bring about that achievement.

Thank you for all that you do for the Earle Baum Center. I will miss my daily involvement but will never stop doing all in my power to see the Earle Baum Center provide community benefits to all in need.

For the last time,

Allan Brenner, CEO



Allan Brenner Receives Lifetime Achievement Award



Allan Brenner EBC CEO

On November 2nd in San Diego VisionServe Alliance honored Allan Brenner with a Lifetime who are blind and visually impaired. Allan has made significant contributions in his role as the founding leader of the organization. Under his leadership the EBC has grown from Earle Baum's original inspiration to become a vibrant entity, serving as a beacon for those with vision loss. Allan's unflagging diligence has been the driving force behind the success of the EBC. Congratulations Allan!

What's Happening at the Earle Baum Center

2nd ANNUAL EBC TECH FAIR

When: Monday December 7th

Where: At the EBC

Hours: 11:00 am to 3:pm

Come see some of the newest assistive technologies & meet the dealers that represent these products.

ART HISTORY THROUGH TOUCH AND SOUND

Our subject is Baroque art in the 17th Century: Architecture, Sculpture & Paintings of Italy, Spain, France and Holland. This hands on class is held at the EBC.

Starts: January 12th, for 10 weeks

Tuesdays 10am to 12pm.

A fee of \$55 is required. Partial or full assistance is available through the Elizabeth Cooley Scholarship program.

Contact Patricia Jefferson 707-636-2314 or Jefferson@earlebaum.org

**You can sign up for EBC Events and Classes Online
Go To WWW.earlebaum.org/signup**



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE EBC HOLIDAY POTLUCK PARTY

Thursday, December 17, from 11:30 to 3pm

Bring a side dish

*Sign up on the EBC Website or call the front office
Food, Music, and Great Company*

SIGN UP FOR EXERCISE CLASS

Exercise class is going strong. The gym is full of clients walking, riding, rowing and working their muscles through a series of instructional exercises lead by Denise Vancil.

Tuesday and Thursdays from 9am to 10am.

Class is free, but donations are always accepted and appreciated.

Sign up and start as soon as you are ready to get in shape.

COME TO EBC AND JOIN THE LOW VISION SUPPORT

Learn about services, classes and training Low Vision Aides /Magnification Devices, Introduction to Assistive Technologies

Daily Living Skills Management

1st and 3rd Thursday of the Month—this class is FREE

11:00 am to 1:00 pm -

BRAILLE IN THE NEW YEAR!

*January 4, 2016, Louis Braille's 207th birthday, is the official date of the adoption of Unified English Braille (UEB). **Do you know Braille?** Do you want to be updated to the exciting changes that will appear in all Braille books and communication?*

Contact Denise Vancil, Braille instructor, for more information and to enroll in our comprehensive UEB training. Don't get left behind!

Denise can be reached at 707-523-7832 or call the EBC Office.



Earle Baum Center

Serving People with Sight Loss

Independent Living Skills

Orientation and Mobility

Assistive Technology Services

VA Support and Senior Services

EBC Site Tours—call for a tour appointment.

Exercise, Tap, and Tai Chi classes

For more information from the Earle Baum Center

Call our office for more information: 707-523-3222

Visit our Website: www.earlebaum.org

Sign up for classes and Events on line:

www.earlebaum.org/signup

Activities and Events

Audio Newsletter

Ways to Help

Classes

Resources

Directions to EBC

Support Groups

Support Groups

Contact Us

EBC will be CLOSED the week of Thanksgiving, Nov 23rd through the 27th and the weeks of Christmas and New Years, December 21st through Jan 1st 2016



EARLE BAUM CENTER
4539 Occidental Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

Earle Baum Center

MISSION STATEMENT

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

**SAVE the DATE: 2nd Annual Tech Fair “FREE”
Dec 7th, Monday, 11am to 3pm, RSVP on line or call**