



THE VISIONARY

July—August 2022

From the Director's Desk



The Division of Blind Services has been working on several exciting projects, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to share them with you in the newly redesigned Visionary newsletter! Plans are underway to rebrand DBS' residential center in Daytona Beach. The center's proposed name, identified through input for DBS clients, staff, and leadership, is the: Career, Technology, and Training Center (CTTC) for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This new name is representative of current and future services of the CTTC.

Part of our vision for expanding the types of training and education services provided at the CTTC will lead to the introduction of programs that offer blind and visually impaired clients greater access to career pathways and new certifications. As such, the CTTC began working to implement the CompTIA Certification training and developing a Web Accessibility Specialist (WAS) Registered Apprenticeship Program. CompTIA certifications cover computer maintenance, network support, server administration and data security. The WAS Registered Apprenticeship serves as an entry-level information technology apprenticeship designed to train individuals with visual impairments on becoming web accessibility specialists and to serve as a formal introduction to the field of Information Technology.

We recognize that there is also tremendous prospect for our clients to position themselves for work-from-home opportunities. We are exploring and laying the groundwork to launch a Call-Center Training program to prepare clients for work in this rapidly growing field. We are identifying staffing and technology needs for this training and hope we can announce the implementation of a program by Summer 2023.



Vision and Eye Health Awareness

July

Eye Injury Prevention Month
UV Safety Month

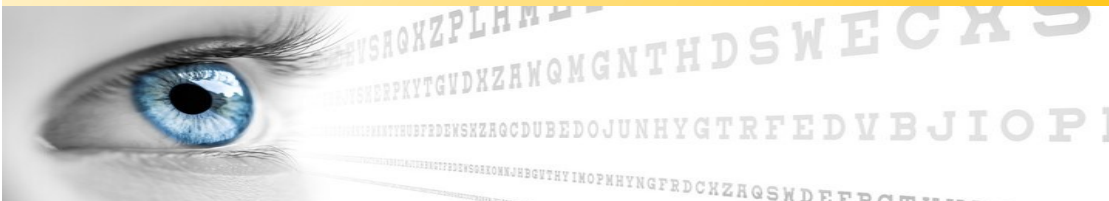
August

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
Cataract Awareness Month



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Welcome Commissioner Diaz!



The Division of Blind Services (DBS) welcomes Manny Diaz, Jr. as Florida's next Commissioner of Education. Commissioner Diaz's appointment was effective June 1, 2022, and he is the first Hispanic Commissioner of Education in Florida's history.

Commissioner Diaz has served as a Senator in the Florida Legislature since 2012, and has a strong background in education. He has worked as a public-school teacher, coach, assistant principal, and school administrator, and has acquired a wealth of classroom experience, which has equipped him for his new role as Commissioner of Education. Commissioner Diaz received his bachelor's degree from St. Thomas University and his master's degree in education from Nova Southeastern University. He also completed a Harvard Graduate School of Education program for principals.

The Division of Blind Services is excited about the leadership that Commissioner Diaz brings to the Department and looks forward to his continuing support as we help blind and visually impaired individuals achieve their goals for independence and self sufficiency.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

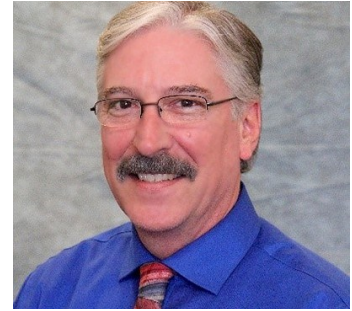
Bureau Chief of Library Services Retires

Jim Woolyhand, Bureau Chief of Library Services at the Braille and Talking Book Library, has retired after 34 years with DBS.

Jim majored in Rehabilitation Services at Florida State University. During his last semester of college, he interned with the DBS District 5 office. Jim then worked as an OPS Reader/Driver in the District 5 office.

Jim returned to DBS in 1987 as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor after seven years of employment with Daytona State College. "When I began [as a Rehabilitation Counselor], we didn't have computers," Jim recalled. Jim earned his master's degree from Stetson University a few years later while continuing to work full-time. He worked as a Counselor until 2009 when he became Administrator for District Five. Jim was asked to help the Braille and Talking Book Library in 2015, which led to his role as Bureau Chief, which he held until his retirement.

"We are blessed in many ways, and I wouldn't change a thing," Jim said when asked about special memories from his time at DBS. "I enjoyed my time at DBS and working with Floridians who are blind."



Jim Woolyhand, former Bureau Chief of Library Services at the Braille and Talking Book Library

In Jim's notice of retirement, he said: "My experiences in working with our State Office staff, DBS campus staff, clients, library patrons, and current and past supervisors and coworkers have made me realize the gratitude I have for the opportunity to have worked with the various DBS teams over the years. . . With staff continuing to work together with the focus of providing services, our staff is making a difference in the lives of many throughout our state with the specialized services provided by DBS. Thank you for your continued support."

Best wishes in retirement, Jim!

Happy Work Anniversary!

Congratulations to the following staff celebrating milestone anniversaries with DBS in July and August!

One Year:

Joseph Carson
Debra Karcher
James Oates
Trina Travis
Charles Triplett

Five Years:

Glenda Alvarado
Richard Matthews
Doreen Minott
Whitley Williamson

Ten Years:

Christopher Hepburn
Richard Huffman

Fifteen Years:

Saravanan Angamuthu



The Library has Expanded its Membership to Persons With All Types of Disabilities

The Braille and Talking Book Library now offers its services to individuals with all types of disabilities. Anyone unable to access standard print due to vision loss, blindness, a physical disability, or a certifiable reading disability may be eligible for the Library's free services.

Previously, the Library's certification process required a medical doctor's signature. But now, thanks to the updated expansion requirements, any qualified professional, such as a teacher, counselor, or nurse may certify a person's eligibility.

This increases the opportunities to put the valuable resources the Library has to offer in the hands of more people that need them.

Library staff and the Talking Book Library Task Force have been working hard to inform the community since the National Library Service made these more inclusive changes. You can help spread the word by sharing this information with your friends, family, and DBS clients.

Visit the Library's webpage on the DBS website to learn more. <https://dbs.fldoe.org/Library/>



"Anyone unable to access standard print due to vision loss, blindness, a physical disability, or a certified reading disability may be eligible for the Library's free services."

Q&A with the Bureau of Client Services

What does the Bureau of Client Services do?

The Bureau of Client Services offers the following programs and services that support Floridians who are blind or visually impaired: Blind Babies ages 0-5, Children ages 6-13, Pre-Employment Transition and Transition Services ages 14-24, Vocational Rehabilitation ages 14+, Older Blind ages 55+, and Independent Living/Adult ages 18-54.

How many people work in Client Services?

There are currently 141 employees in the Bureau of Client Services.

Whom does Client Services serve?

Individuals who are visually impaired or blind and have a bilateral eye medical condition that presents an impediment to their vocation, education and or independence.

How does Client Services do what it does?

Services are provided after eligibility is determined based on medical documentation, assessments, and initial interviews. DBS team members possess bachelor's or master's degrees and professional experience in related fields such as health, social, economic or rehabilitation programs.

What are the future or long-term goals of Client Services?

The goal is to support the division's mission "to ensure blind and visually impaired Floridians have the tools, support and opportunity to achieve success." The long-term goals align with the Strategic Plan and the WIOA Unified State Plan.

*Submitted by Ana Saint-Fort,
Program Administrator*



Braille & Talking Book Library Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon



Lisa Wise and Ted Pobst, District 5

The Florida Braille and Talking Book Library held recently its 46th annual Volunteer Appreciation luncheon after a two-year hiatus. The Friends of Library Access, Inc. hosted the luncheon that included Library volunteers, staff, and guests from the District 5 office, the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Conklin-Davis Center for the Multi-handicapped Blind attended. DBS Director Robert Doyle III was the opening speaker, followed by Librarian Maureen Dorosinski.

The print and braille programs included a Volunteer Honor Roll listing volunteers and their years of service to the Library, and featured volunteers with decades of time donated. A slideshow of photos taken at previous luncheons played as guests enjoyed their lunches. These photos, especially one of recently retired Bureau Chief James Woolyhand with former DBS Deputy Director Antionette Williams conjured feelings of nostalgia as attendees celebrated while remembering past volunteers and colleagues.



DBS Director, Robert Doyle

Everyone enjoyed the lunch, the speakers, and recognition, but most of all, everyone enjoyed meeting in person after the two-year hiatus. Thank you to all who attended to help celebrate these fabulous volunteers!

Submitted by Kathy Searle Acevedo, Volunteer Services Center Specialist

MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

— **Anne Frank**

July is Eye Injury Prevention Month

When it comes to eye injuries, prevention is key. But are you taking the easiest step of all to prevent injury? Using proper protective eyewear can prevent up to 90 percent of all eye injuries. However, only about one in three people claim they always wear protective eyewear when performing home repairs or maintenance. Even fewer do so while playing sports.

Home repairs, yard work, cleaning and cooking cause nearly half of all eye injuries. More than a third of injuries in the home happen in the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, living room or family room, and nearly half of all eye injuries every year are related to sports or recreational activities. Sun exposure can also damage eyes.

Always wear sunglasses or sport-appropriate UV-protective goggles when outdoors.

If you have an eye injury, see an ophthalmologist or other medical doctor as soon as possible, even if the injury seems minor.



This article was shared with permission from the American Academy of Ophthalmologists. To read the full Eye Injury Prevention article visit www.aao.org.

Business Enterprise Program

Vendor Spotlight: Ryan Akeley

At age 29, Ryan Akeley had already faced many challenges. Legally blind since 2005 due to Stargardt disease, Ryan had worked in entry level food service jobs. In 2020, Ryan decided that he wanted a better life for himself, his wife, and their four children.

When Ryan saw a video about the DBS Business Enterprise Program, it gave him hope. Ryan applied and was recommended for training.



Ryan Akeley

Despite the training setbacks he experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the closure of the training center, Ryan persevered and was licensed in September 2020. Opportunities were limited though as many operations were temporarily closed or had reduced sales as employees worked remotely. Only three facilities were posted on the January 2021 selection cycle, including a previously lucrative snack bar in the Palm Beach County Courthouse that came available when that operator

retired.

This facility would typically be awarded to an experienced operator, but the facility had been closed for almost a year and there was no guarantee that the business would return to its former level or even be viable.

Ryan was awarded the Palm Beach facility and was grateful for this opportunity to start a business. He was initially faced with challenges in the area of low sales and inconsistent business. Affordable housing was also hard to find, but Ryan persisted. With his wife, Meshala, by his side assisting him, the business is turning a corner. Sales are increasing, and Ryan celebrated a year in his facility on April 28.

With his perseverance and can-do attitude, Ryan Akeley is off to a successful career and is the future of the Business Enterprise Program.

To learn more about the DBS Business Enterprise Program, please visit: dbs.fldoe.org/bbe/Index.html



Ryan and his wife, Meshala

FRCB Meeting Notice

The Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (FRCB) will conduct its Quarterly Meeting and Public Forum.

Date:

July 28-29, 2022

Location:

Orlando, FL

Call in:

1 (850) 583-5063

Conference ID

252 795 423#

July 28, 2022

Business Meeting:

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Public Forum:

5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

July 29, 2022

9 a.m. to 12 Noon

District Spotlight

District 3 – Jacksonville Office

Time for a Laugh!

What do you call a Labrador at the beach in July?

A hot dog.

What do you call a cat who lives at the beach?

Sandy Claws.

I entered ten puns in a contest to see which would win.

No pun in ten did.

Which letter is the coolest during the summer?

Iced T.

Where does the library keep books about Big-foot?

The large-print section.

Why was the family so tired after returning from summer vacation?

They flew all the way home.

District Three, which includes Jacksonville, Gainesville, and the surrounding areas, has experienced lots of change recently! We are on track to significantly surpass last year's number of successful closures in the Vocational Rehabilitation program despite staff vacancies. This is in large part due to the work-from-home opportunities available through Lighthouse Works which have allowed many of our clients to find employment. From Lighthouse Works alone, we have had 33 clients attain employment which resulted in 30 of them being closed successfully this fiscal year.

Our collaboration with Lighthouse Works and the Vision Education & Rehabilitation Center (VERC), our local Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP), helped to develop a tailored assistive technology training to best prepare our future clients for customer services positions at the Department of Children & Families (DCF) along with similar types of customer service positions. DCF also helped to address effective transportation options and computer accessibility with adaptive enlargement and screen reading software, the biggest barriers to individuals with vision impairments.

Another employer we are excited about is Amazon, as we recently have had in-services with the regional contacts for both the Jacksonville and Gainesville office. They have already hired a few of our clients and are willing and able to accommodate qualified applicants at any level of vision impairment including those who are totally blind.

We also have a positive addition with Amanda Bornhoffer, who is a DBS client that began employment on May 9, with VERC. Her primary responsibility will be to provide adjustment to

blindness counseling. Amanda has an MSW from UNF. She just graduated from UNF this spring in her master's program in Social Work and according to her DBS Counselor she was the first one in her program of study to attain employment. This has been a great addition as it has been a few years since our local CRP has had an instructor that is blind or visually impaired. While this is not a requirement it certainly can be helpful especially in the position of Adjustment to Blindness Counselor to help establish rapport. This is especially the case since she received services as a client from VERC in the Transition program and also had DBS support as a college student.



*Jacksonville DBS Team
at an Awareness event*

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for our diverse team and for the partnership of the Jacksonville Assistant District Administrator, Jean Fiore, for facilitating a positive and stable work environment! We have a great rapport with our local CRPs, and our local Career Source offices. These partnerships, along with other community partners, will only continue to grow, and thus facilitate more referrals/applications for services, and successful outcomes!

*Submitted by Dan O'Connor,
Administrator, District Three Administrator*

Recipe: Watermelon Feta Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 c. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 c. cubed seedless watermelon
- 1 c. medium cucumber, chopped
- 1 c. crumbled feta
- 1/2 c. red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 c. coarsely chopped mint
- Flaky sea salt, for garnish (optional)

Yields: 4 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

From: www.delish.com

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, and kosher salt.
2. In a large serving bowl, combine watermelon, cucumber, feta, red onion, and mint. Pour dressing over salad, tossing to combine.
3. Garnish with more mint and flaky sea salt.

Tip: Many love the saltiness and crumbliness of feta, but if you don't like this cheese, try fresh mozzarella balls or goat cheese as they would work too. To take some of the bite out of the red onions, soak the slices in water for about 15 minutes.



Summer Reading Fun with the Braille and Talking Book Library

The theme for the Braille and Talking Book Library's Summer Reading Program this year is **Oceans of Possibilities**. The program began June 20 and runs until August 1. The Library has curated reading lists and activities for people in every age group to enjoy.



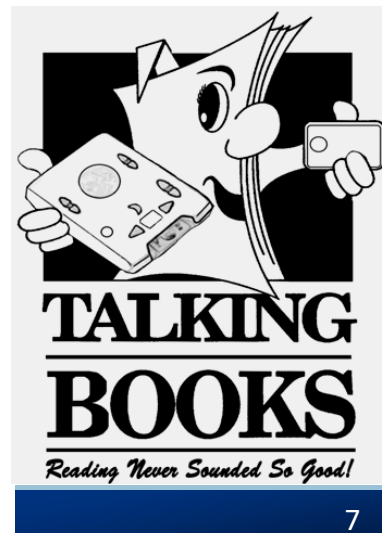
Once registered, participants will receive instant access to the reading lists if signed up for the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD), as well as earn incentives

to keep reading throughout the upcoming weeks.

How to register:

1. Email the name(s) and age(s) of the participant(s) to reading@dbs.fldoe.org.
2. Receive the curated reading lists and activities.
3. Read as many books as you can from that week's booklist and complete one or more activities.
4. Submit any activities and books you completed from the current week to reading@dbs.fldoe.org (this is not a requirement to participate)
5. Have fun reading!

Summer reading is always more fun with a friend, so share this information with your reading buddies!



We are Hiring!

The Division of Blind Services is looking for positive, productive, accountable "people people." Ideal candidates demonstrate the principles of flexibility, adaptability, approachability, communication, collaboration and coordination. If this is you, we invite you to look at the opportunities we have available at:

[DBS.FLDOE.ORG/
INFORMATION/
JOBS.HTML](https://www.flstate.gov/dbsservices/information/jobs.html)

If you believe you are the right fit for us, we look forward to connecting with you.

"Read Different" Highlights Library's Services

The See Different team hosted a virtual statewide "Read Different" event on June 7th. Designed to highlight the Braille and Talking Book Library and its many valuable and life-enhancing services, the seminar included information and testimonials dispelling common myths about eligibility being only for blind/visually impaired.

The Library tour gave participants a peek into how the Library works, and the testimonials highlighted the value the Library service can add to a person's life. To learn more about the

Braille and Talking Book Library, please visit:

[DBS.MYFLORIDA.COM/
LIBRARY](https://www.dbsservices.org/library)



Do you have news from your District, an employee you'd like to spotlight, blind services information or events to share, or a favorite recipe you'd like to feature in the DBS Visionary? Please share it with us at Communications@dbsservices.org

Florida Division of Blind Services

THE VISIONARY NEWSLETTER
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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure blind and visually-impaired Floridians have the tools, support and opportunity to achieve success

HAPPY 4th of July!

Wishing you a safe holiday and a wonderful Summer!

