



November 2014



Seen and Heard

Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority

Volume 2, Issue 1



Superintendent's Corner

As the end of November approaches (and Christmas comes into view), I hope your autumn is going well.

It's been a busy period since our June newsletter ... borne out by the items reported herein. With special appreciation to contributors, this Seen & Heard includes student activities, staff recognition, Board and Auxiliary information.

This issue revives the "Faces of APSEA" feature, to help us get to know members of our APSEA community a little better. In this regard, please suggest/nominate a colleague (or yourself) for a future issue.



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Amy Parsons Appointed to the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission

As you may be aware, Provincial governments have many Agencies, Boards and Commissions. The Disabled Persons Commission advises government on Disability Issues. Every two years a newspaper advertisement is placed encouraging Nova Scotians to apply in order to assist the province fulfill its mandate.

Amy Parsons, APSEA's Educational Interpreter Consultant, applied to the

Disabled Persons Commission and in September was appointed to the Commission by the Minister of Community Services, Joanne Bernard.

The Commission tries to ensure there is a broad representation of persons with disabilities sitting on the Commission and Amy will assist greatly on issues affecting the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

APSEA/Elks Deaf Camp 2014

- submitted by Sheila Jamieson, Supervisor of Residential Programs

In August, 32 campers attended Camp at Lake Magaguadavic in NB. Camp activities included the early morning dip (Polar Bear Swim), craft activities with Sally Austin, and water front games with Jamie and Erin (lifeguards).



At the Talent Show, the little girls in cabin 11 captivated the audience with their adorable animal skit. Fun was had by all at the boat building regatta and race. You can see from the photos what creativity was utilized for this event!

The campers had lots of fun solving the case of the missing flag. Cabin 10 enjoyed their catered breakfast on the deck after receiving the Golden Broom for keeping their cabin spotless all week.

In addition to the campers, we had 7 volunteer Junior Counselors. These individuals had an opportunity to participate in a two-day leadership workshop held at APSEA prior to camp. This helped prepare them for what leadership is and what it means to be an effective leader. They also explored "Communication"; how it happens and what can prevent effective communication from taking place.

It was evident from their work at camp they gained much from this experience because they utilized their knowledge about what it means to work as a team player.

We also had two volunteer workers, who assisted with the running of camp by setting tables, delivering snacks/drinks, along with setting up/cleaning up various activities. When these two lads were finished their duties, they had an opportunity to take part in some of the summer fun. This was a great work experience for both young men.



Sussex Preschool Picnic

- submitted by Nancy Bradley, Melissa Rohloff, Sandra Mihan & Charity Turner

On a beautiful, sunny June morning, three families (17 people in total) attended a family picnic at O'Connell Park in Sussex, NB. A fourth family hoped to attend, but unfortunately were unable to come due to medical reasons. The three APSEA preschool students present, Ella (2.5), Ashton (2.5 years) and Rhylee (2 years), are on the direct service caseload of Sandra Mihan for Orientation and Mobility. Ella's family had four generations present at the picnic. Ella is served by Nancy Bradley, Ashton is served by Melissa Rohloff and Rhylee is served by Charity Turner. All students have a severe visual impairment.



After everyone had been introduced, Sandra led a scavenger hunt with the three children and their siblings. The children were directed to find three objects in various locations around the park, and to explore the texture of the ground around each object. Pails and shovels were placed in the sand, windmills were on the grass and rubber ducks were on the ce-

ment splash pad. Children had the opportunity to walk on a variety of different surfaces (e.g., grass, gravel, sand, cement) with their shoes off and with their shoes on. Following the scavenger hunt, Nancy led a sing-song with the children. Everyone participated in songs that involved gross motor movements and promoted concept development. One song in particular had the children explore real objects related to brushing teeth, combing hair, face washing, and had them mimic the appropriate actions. A light lunch was then provided on a picnic blanket under a sun umbrella.



This event was a wonderful opportunity for families to connect with other families of children with severe visual impairments. The families enjoyed observing other children's tactile exploration. They interacted with each other about sleeping patterns, eating struggles, and tactile defensiveness. At least two families plan to maintain an ongoing connection via social media.



It was beneficial for the families to see other children around the same chronological age, and recognize the differences in terms of development. Each child had different strengths in a variety of skill areas including: orientation and mobility, self-initiated exploration, independent living, social and communication skills. It is crucial to the confidence of the parents to see this variety, so they can feel assured their child will develop at their own rate, with their own strengths and needs, and know they are not alone in some of their struggles. Now these family connections have been made, they can more readily support each other in the future. All the families expressed appreciation for this opportunity and hoped to reconnect for a similar activity in the fall.





Faces of APSEA

Amy Parsons is APSEA's Educational Interpreter Consultant. Her work focuses on the application of interpreting research to best practices, and supporting interpreter professional development planning and strategies.

When not holed up in her office at the Centre, Amy can be found visiting and meeting with interpreters and students at schools in NS and NB.

A proud alum of APSEA services, Amy has a background in literacy resource development for the Deaf community, research and communications planning.

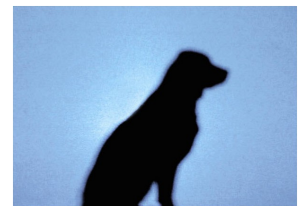


Colleen Little has worked in the Audiology Department since 1994 as a Hearing Systems Technologist, responsible for the maintenance, troubleshooting and record keeping of educational equipment owned by APSEA. In addition she assists CESPAs and HEAR with their equipment maintenance and requests. Off hours, you'll find her spending her time helping rescue blind, blind-deaf or deaf dogs: <http://www.blinddogrescue.org/>



The following was received from another staff member about Colleen.

*"I wanted to take a minute to send a note to express my appreciation for **Colleen Little**. I have had to make several calls to her this term to be guided through some trouble shooting to set up my FM equipment with new hearing aids (two students). I'm sure she sensed my panic and frustration, but remained calm and encouraging as she guided me through the steps to get things up and running. She is clear in her directions and contemplative as she considers new steps if something doesn't work out the first time. She is a gem hidden deep in the audiology wing."*



Emi Morse's Classroom Presentation on the Ear and How She Hears

- submitted by Sacha Stoddart, DHH Itinerant Teacher

Emi Morse is a third grade student at Coldbrook & District School. Toward the end of grade two, Emi and I spent time learning about the ear and how she hears with her bilateral cochlear implants. Emi has an innate desire to learn and was fascinated by the ear. We had quite the discussion about how she hears compared to how another student in her school hears via a hearing aid.

“Emi was the first child in Nova Scotia to receive bilateral cochlear implants simultaneously.”

Emi is a confident student who fully embraces and accepts her deafness. Following a conversation with her classroom teacher one day regarding her cochlear implants, Emi - without any encouragement - decided she wanted to share with her class how the ear works and how she hears.

I was unaware of this decision, but was quite excited when she nonchalantly asked me the morning of her presentation if she could borrow my large ear model and “Kevin the Koala Bear” to show her class. Of course, I readily agreed and invited myself to the presentation.

Emi did an amazing job! She stood in front of her entire grade two class and identified the three parts of the ear and described how sound travels to the ear. She told her peers the part of her ears that do not work and how sound travels to her brain via her bilateral cochlear implants. She explained that when she was born, she wore hearing aids and learned some sign language before becoming the first child in Nova Scotia to receive bilateral cochlear implants simultaneously. From there, she described how she charges her implants overnight and when she might need to use disposable batteries.

Emi also openly answered numerous questions her classmates asked such as: How did you become deaf? How do you hear when you go swimming? How old were you when you got your cochlear implants? How do your parents wake you up in the morning? Emi's peers were an attentive audience and it was evident Emi thoroughly enjoyed discussing her hearing with them. Her ease and calmness in front of the class was admirable. I was filled with pride as I listened to her. Excellent job Emi!



**If you have an article for a future issue of Seen and Heard, please submit to:
apsea@apsea.ca**

Playground Opening

On Wednesday, September 24 APSEA hosted an opening ceremony for the new playground. As noted in the June newsletter, approximately three-quarters of the \$200,000 required had already been pledged/donated. Many of these donors were able to join APSEA staff, students and members of the Board of Directors to be recognized and thanked for their generous donations. Emma Hebb, APSEA student, led the group in a song she wrote for the event, which was followed by a ribbon-cutting and barbeque lunch.



Trident News photos,
used with permission.

"Drowning"

- submitted by Caitlin Dunlop, Grade 7



There's salt in my lungs and I want to cough
 But I can't.
 There's a circle of fire around my ribs.
 The water won't let me breathe
 It's choking me.
 I want to scream but not one sound comes out of my mouth.
 Thoughts fly through my head thinking of the future

I will never be able to get back.
 I can't breathe.
 I'm deep, deep underwater.
 I feel like struggling and swimming to the air
 But I can't move
 My chest flares with fire.
 I've got to breathe in, but I'm so far down
 I'll never get to the surface in time.
 So I let go and slowly sink down.



Caitlin is a DHH student who lives in New Glasgow and is on Jennifer MacAulay's caseload.



Retirement Celebration

During the recent Fall Inservice, APSEA hosted a retirement reception on October 23. Although four retirees were invited (Tom Attebery, Sean Flanagan, Steve Trussoni and Sharon Woynar) only Steve and Sean were able to join us. Beverages and finger foods were served, then each retiree was honoured and given time to say a few words.



Sean at the mic responding to a "roast" by Patrick Daley.

Wishing each of you all the best in your retirement!



Steve and Mary Jean Bray following her introduction for Steve.

APSEA AUXILIARY ... Did You Know?

- submitted by Patsy Newman, President

DID YOU KNOW the APSEA Auxiliary is middle aged? The APSEA Auxiliary was started in the early 1970's at the Halifax School for the Blind by the volunteer coordinator who recognized the need for donations of money and other items to support the students, who at that time, lived in Residence during the school year. These students came from all over Atlantic Canada and enjoyed participating in a variety of activities at the school and in the community. Activities included camping trips, CGIT group, Scouts, Girl Guides, hockey, soccer, track and field, gymnastics, dance, music and fine arts.

DID YOU KNOW the first members came from various church groups, community organizations and interested individuals? Events such as the Fall Fair, Bridge/Dessert Social, Fashion Shows, Bake Sales and Plant Sales soon became valuable fundraising events.



DID YOU KNOW the Halifax School for the Blind Ladies Auxiliary was responsible for initiating a Toy Library? This Toy Library was one of a few which existed in the province at that time. Today, the APSEA Toy Library continues to be funded by the APSEA Auxiliary and is well managed by APSEA and equipped to meet the diverse needs of all students.

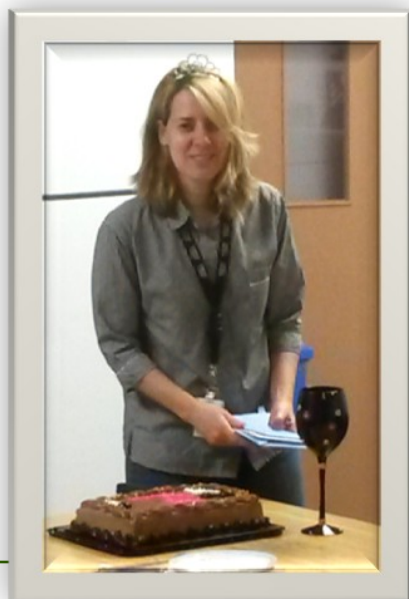
DID YOU KNOW the APSEA Auxiliary continues to support APSEA students through two main fundraising activities; the annual Fall Fair and Bridge/Dessert Social? Donations from individuals, church groups, community organizations and APSEA staff also generate revenue for the Auxiliary. These funds support the Toy Library, Annual Bursary Awards, summer programming, and requests for specific student needs.

DID YOU KNOW the APSEA Auxiliary has a committed membership, some of whom were members as far back as the conception of the School for the Blind Ladies Auxiliary? The Auxiliary meets monthly from September to May at the APSEA Centre and new members are always welcome! The Auxiliary membership is comprised of both male and female members.

DID YOU KNOW the APSEA Auxiliary is exploring alternative models for the Auxiliary and fundraising activities? If you have ideas that may help with attracting new members and fundraising possibilities, we would like to hear them. You can contact the auxiliary at auxiliary@apsea.ca



Birthday Wishes



All the best to this “princess in a tiara” who recently turned 50.

Staff joined a birthday surprise for Sheila Jamieson with cake and best wishes.



Braille Challenge Finals (Update)

- submitted by Sheila Jamieson, Supervisor of Residential Programs

As you may remember from APSEA's June Newsletter, I had the opportunity to attend the Braille Challenge Finals, held in Los Angeles. Here I had the privilege to meet the true stars of Hollywood - the Braille Challenge competitors! I spent an amazing weekend with 59 inspiring Braille Readers. The remarkable event was organized by the Braille Institute and began with a meet and greet on Friday evening at the Universal City Hilton, which was attended by family and teachers of the participants. The room was decorated like a circus big top with lots of carnival-type food. Participants got to meet with peers and made new friendships, which was evident later at the dance and again at the pool.

rium. The participants proceeded to the stage with the accompaniment of the Marching Band. While the children were competing, the parents attended workshops, and siblings participated in various activities. During this time I had the opportunity to tour the Braille Institute and meet with the planning committee to discuss next year's event.



The event was emceed by Robert Kovacik, NBC Los Angeles Anchor and Reporter. Special guest emcees were Atticus Shaffer, who plays Brick Heck on the popular sitcom 'The Middle' and Scott Innes, the renowned voice of Scooby-Doo and many other cartoon characters.

Throughout this event I also had the opportunity meet and collaborate with many other teachers and devoted professionals who were involved in Braille Challenge Regionals.

I was honored to take part in such a fabulous event and I have many new ideas for APSEA's 2015 Braille Challenge, thus enabling us to bring it to a new level. I look forward to planning and implementing our next event.

Next year's apprentice test will be offered in Unified English Braille (UEB). To assist with the transition to UEB, remaining tests will be created to avoid UEB confusion for the test takers, i.e., no words in the spelling test will be selected that have words which the UEB code would apply to. If you have any questions, please contact me.



The next morning the Braille Challenge breakfast was held at the Braille Institute. The competition began after the opening ceremonies held in the audito-

The day finished with an awards gala back at the Universal City Hilton, where the circus theme continued. This was a more formal event with a sit-down meal.



Camp See Ya

- submitted by Sheila Jamieson, Supervisor of Residential Programs

Thirty (30) campers between the ages of 8 and 15 attended Camp See Ya at Brigadoon in July 2014.

Six campers enrolled in the Leadership in Training (LIT) Program. As part of the LIT program, the campers had separate sessions on what it means to be a leader, and they hosted the campfire on the last evening where Kaitlyn Dowe received the Brigadoon Eagle Spirit Award.



Kaitlyn with her Award

Cooking was incorporated as part of the rotation of activities this year. Campers reported they enjoyed the following activities: swimming, canoeing, waterfront activities, cooking, campfire, carnival day, hanging out, and making new friends. The Polar Bear swim is often reported as a favourite.

This year Janet MacVicar joined us at camp. Her input on how to adapt the activities was greatly appreciated. The Brigadoon staff loved Janet's enthusiasm and they incorporated her ideas to ensure everyone had an opportunity to participate in all events.



One student reported they especially enjoyed Camp Brigadoon because it was, "A place where I am not alone."



Staffing Update



The following is an update of staff who are new to APSEA since the June newsletter was prepared.

Denise Cameron—Alternate Format Materials Technician (APSEA Centre)

Ayoka Junaid—Contract Interpreter (APSEA Centre)

Jacquelyn Cormier—BVI Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Heather Limpert—BVI Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Morganne West—BVI Itinerant Teacher (Chignecto-Central Regional School Board)

Trip to Cherry Brook Zoo

- submitted by Rosa Riedel, Grade 7

On October 10th, 2014, I travelled to the Cherry Brook Zoo in Saint John. I was accompanied by my itinerant Melissa Rohloff along with the magnificent Trynity Dakin, another student of APSEA.

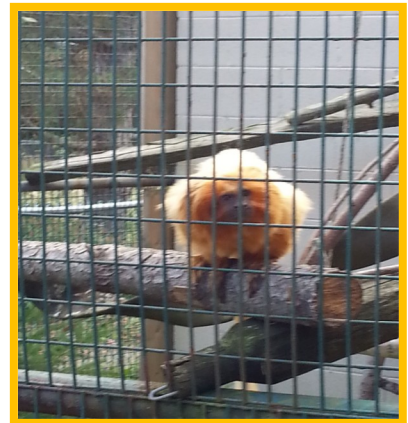
As we rapidly walked into the gift shop, I scanned the face of a younger girl with hair practically the same color as mine. She had an everlasting smile that made me assume she was sweet and caring. She also seemed very mature and liked browsing the things that were for sale.

The first animals we came in contact with were Rory and Rosa, two zebras. The most astonishing creature we had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with, was a snow leopard. Her golden eyes showed she was depressed because she was confined.

There also was a Tamarin monkey who seemed to be very fat. I renamed him batman for the reason that he was literally jumping and running at the same time around his cage.

We used a monocular telescope to see bones that were part of a display for a Bali Tiger that became extinct several years ago. Without the monocular, it looked as if the bones had been part of the rock; however, when I brought the object into focus, I discovered that it really was bones that the tiger had in front of it.

It was really fun meeting another student that had the same eye condition as me because there's not many others that have albinism. We both had trouble seeing the frogs in the pond. The day was gorgeous, the sun was shining, everyone was smiling and we had a great time.





Space Camp Experience

- submitted by Gabrielle Close, grade 7

A year ago my itinerant teacher Marcy Tilford asked me if I would like to go to space camp in Huntsville, Alabama. I was unsure about going at first, so I researched about what they do at space camp. After my research, I decided that I would like to go to space camp. I fundraised by selling cookies at my school.

On September 19 at 3 a.m. we drove to the Halifax airport. I had never left Canada before and had never been through customs. There was a lot of walking in the airport and my itinerant loved all the O&M.

At 10 a.m. we arrived in Nashville, Tennessee. A driver picked us up and we went on a tour in a plantation home. I was really tired at the tour. After the tour, we went to a Southern restaurant. I had shrimp and rice.

The driver then took us to space camp. We were shown where we would sleep in a big dome shaped building called the habitat. Our team made the beds and then we went downstairs to hang out for a bit and see if we could make some friends. Then we unpacked our things and went to bed.



We woke up the next morning and went for a walk and then we went shopping. We came back at 3:00 p.m. to start our activities. First, we went to the museum of space history, and we looked at spaceships.

We were shown where the engines were and learned a little bit about how rockets fly. The museum is also where we met the rest of our team. Our team name was Antares.

We were with our team for amazing activities for every day at space camp. Some of my favourite activities were the space simulators, and the missions that we did in the spaceship model with the scripts. I also liked building and launching a cardboard rocket, swimming in a man-made lake, designing a community out of little blocks on Mars and learning about the space shuttle.

I think every APSEA student should have the opportunity to go to space camp. It was an amazing experience and I would definitely go back. I would like to thank my chaperones Marcy Tilford and Nova Herring for this great opportunity.



Excellence in Teaching Award

The **Excellence in Teaching Award** was presented to APSEA Teacher, Karen Keats, during the Canadian Conference for Educators, Parents and Professionals of Children who are Blind or Partially Sighted held in Halifax May 4-7, 2014. This award is presented to a teacher engaged in direct service to children and youth who are blind or partially sighted and who demonstrates outstanding innovation and dedication as an educator. Karen's teaching expertise, her dedication to braille literacy and her additional projects [Braille is Beautiful photograph, APSEA Playground and A Letter to Santa book] were all highlighted in the announcement of this great honour.



Bert Tulk and Karen Keats

Board News

Assessment Travel Costs

Last year, much work was done on the Strategic Plan around student success and assessment. In response to a concern that distance may prevent some parents from travelling to Halifax for their child's assessment, the Board agreed to cover travel costs for parents to accompany their children to assessments at the APSEA Centre.

Effective September 2014, APSEA will cover the cost of one round trip to the Centre for assessment, when the distance from the Centre warrants an overnight stay. One of the following options will be covered:

- Kilometrage at the rate paid by the Province of Nova Scotia,
- Bus/train fare for the child and one parent/guardian,
- For students from Newfoundland and Labrador, airfare for the child and one parent/guardian, plus kilometrage/taxi to and from the airport.

Airfare will be arranged and paid for by APSEA. Kilometrage will be determined through Google Maps and will be reimbursed upon submission of the form "Travel to the APSEA Centre for Assessment". Train/bus fare will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts or may be paid directly by APSEA.

In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Director/designate, APSEA may cover the cost of travel in situations which do not meet the indicated criteria.



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