

# E-CONNECTOR

## News from Colorado Parents of Blind Children (CO-POBC)

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### GUIDE DOG OR CANE? PROS AND CONS TO CONSIDER

Many blind/visually impaired kids can't wait for the day they will be old enough to apply for a guide dog. Their parents may encourage this hopeful waiting, believing that a dog will keep their child safe. Families can easily get wrapped up in the "warm and fuzzy" image of the noble canine that will resolve all their worries about letting their child go out into the world. The truth of the matter is that there are definite pros and cons to the choice of using a guide dog for travel. Keep in mind that the minimum age requirement is commonly 16 years old for most dog training schools, but the applicant's maturity and circumstances are always taken into account.

Here are some pros and cons to consider:

**PRO:** A dog is trained to avoid obstacles. The benefit is fewer bumps and bruises. For example, making one's way through a cafeteria filled with tables may go more smoothly with a dog guide.

**CON:** There isn't the same feedback from the environment that one gets from tapping a cane. Walking down the street and tapping the edge of a mailbox or light pole, or hearing the echo of the cane tap when passing a building or doorway, will give the cane user some sense of orientation that can be very helpful in knowing where you are.

**PRO:** A dog will learn the routes that are taken most often, making those trips swift and relatively carefree.

**CON:** What happens if your dog is sick? Will you be able to make that trip with a cane? Keeping up cane skills is vitally important.

**PRO:** A dog is a companion.

**CON:** A dog is animal needing more care and attention than the average pet dog. Daily grooming, regular meal times and regular "hands on" potty

**Editor's Note:** Please feel free to contact us if you have an announcement you would like included in the newsletter or if you would like to add a friend or family member to the e-mail list. Direct all communications to: [copobc@gmail.com](mailto:copobc@gmail.com), attention Julie Hunter, editor

breaks are required, even when it's freezing cold or pouring rain. You must always consider the dog's needs. You will need to carry his food and water with you when you are going to be out for a long time. A dog will cost a good deal of money in food and veterinarian care over its lifetime.

PRO: A guide dog is a magnet for attention and may help open opportunities for meeting others.

CON: Some people are afraid of dogs or may not want your dog in their home or car.

The bottom line is that travel with a guide dog has some advantages over the cane, and some disadvantages. Whatever choice is made by the mature blind person, it is critically important for the individual to possess excellent cane skills. Travel with a cane will be necessary from time to time, even if the individual opts use a dog guide.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY DR. SEUSS

Dr. Seuss' birthday is March 2<sup>nd</sup> and in his honor March 1<sup>st</sup> is proclaimed Read Across America Day. The National Federation of the Blind is

joining this celebration to show the world that reading Braille is an awesome way to enjoy the crazy, mixed up world of Dr. Seuss. You can find Dr. Seuss books online to download at [Bookshare](#). Borrow from the the [Colorado Talking Book Library](#) or purchase hardcopy Braille books at [National Braille Press](#). Here's a [Youtube post](#) of a blind girl and her sighted friend sharing the reading of a print/Braille copy of a Dr. Seuss story.



### THE NFB AT WORK Colorado Day at the Capitol

Every year members of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado spend a day at the state capitol visiting all the state senators and representatives to make them aware of the legislative priorities of the blind. On Wednesday, February 27, 2013 approximately 50 NFB of Colorado members met at the capitol to carry out this task.

First, the Federation called upon the General Assembly to require full and complete accessibility by the blind and visually impaired to academic tests and assessments for K-12 students. Second, the NFB of

Colorado urged the General Assembly to continue its support of NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup> and Audio Information Network of Colorado. Third, it was suggested that there be a thorough review of the status of public transportation in the state. Information about the Colorado Center for the Blind and the NFB scholarships programs was distributed so that it would be available to any interested constituents.



### 2013 NFB NATIONAL CONVENTION PREVIEW

Start making your plans to attend the 2013 NFB National Convention, July 1 through 6 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida. Here's what's happening:

**\*\* Monday, July 1 – NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PARENTS OF BLIND CHILDREN SEMINAR DAY!**

**\*\* Tuesday, July 2** Registration Day and opening of the HUGE exhibit hall.

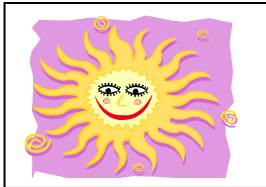
**\*\* Wednesday, July 3 –** Lots of informational workshops and activities for parents and kids.

**\*\* Thursday, July 4 – Saturday, July 6:** General Sessions where all 1,000 or so attendees meet in one ballroom to hear speakers address the important

issues affecting the blind. A banquet on Saturday evening completes the convention.

Day Care for tots, Kid's Camp and Teen Activities available all week. More information can be found on the [NFB Web site](#).

Apply now for a convention scholarship for first time convention goers. Awards of about \$500 are made to a select number of applicants. For further information on the Jernigan Scholarship Program [click here](#). April 15 is the deadline for applications.



## **GEARING UP FOR SUMMER-- HERE'S WHAT'S COMING:**

### **BELL: A SUMMER BRAILLE CAMP FOR KIDS**

The BELL Program is a day camp for children ages 4-12 with a concentration in Braille. Both beginners and more accomplished Braille readers will gain confidence in reading and writing while engaged in games, crafts and exciting outdoor activities.

There will be two programs offered. One will be held in Colorado Springs on the campus of the School for the Deaf and Blind, from June 17-27. The Denver Metro program

will be held at the Rocky Mountain MS Center in Westminster from July 15-26.

For more information contact Diane McGeorge, at 303-321-4268 or e-mail [rmcgeorge@comcast.net](mailto:rmcgeorge@comcast.net), or Michelle Chacon at [mchacon@adams50.org](mailto:mchacon@adams50.org) or phone 303-456-9000. BELL is a project of the National Federation of the Blind.

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(The following programs are offered by the Colorado Center for the Blind. Contact Brent Batron for more information. [bbatron@cocenter.org](mailto:bbatron@cocenter.org) or 303-778-1130 ext. 222.)

### **Confidence Camp for Kids, Elementary School Program, June 10- June 21**

This is a day program for children age 5-10. The kids will work on building skills in Braille and cane travel. They will prepare lunch each day and practice household chores. There will be fun activities such as swimming, hiking, picnicking, and going to an amusement park. Take a look at [this video](#) to see what it's all about.

### **Initiation to Independence, Middle School Program, July 15 – August 2**

Students 12-14 years old will experience apartment living (with a counselor), shopping, cooking, recreational activities as well as building skills in Braille, cane travel and more.

### **Earn and Learn, High School Program, June 7 – August 2**

Students will have a half day paid work experience and half day program in building skills to become an employable adult. A trip to the NFB National Convention is included.

### **Summer for Success College- Prep Program, June 7–August 2**

Students will learn how to navigate a college campus and survive in the college classroom. A trip to the NFB National Convention is included.

## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**



### **March 23**

Century Link Pioneers Beeping Easter Egg Hunt  
Contact J. Kelly for information [jmkelly16@comcast.net](mailto:jmkelly16@comcast.net)

## **SAVE THESE DATES!**

(Colorado Center for the Blind Programs. More details next month.)

### **April 12, 2013:**

Spring Science Seminar  
Accessing the science curriculum and a look at careers in the science fields.

### **April 26, 2013**

College Seminar for high school and college students: What it takes to be successful in college