

NO LIMITS



Newsletter for the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

From the Center

Summer is over. Wow, where has the year gone? It feels like only months ago that we were picking apples and pears from our orchards and now, once again, the fruit is ripe and tastes as good as ever.

Every time I write this message for the newsletter, it seems that something significant has changed. I am a bit sad to announce that our Board President, Tony Candela, has resigned from the EBC Board of Directors. Tony has been a wonderful President, strong supporter, great advisor to me and a friend. The good news, besides still being a friend, is that Tony has been appointed by the Governor to become the new Deputy Director of the Division of Specialized Services for the Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the Department of Rehabilitation. Tony now has an enormous responsibility on his shoulders. I have no doubt that the Governor and Director of the Department of Rehabilitation have chosen the right person. Congratulations Tony! Although you no longer work directly for the EBC, you now work for all people in California who are blind and deaf. Life is good.

We are preparing for the October 8th EBC Dog-a-Thon, a Walk for Independence. This event not only is an opportunity to raise funds and highlight the EBC, it commemorates our Sixth Anniversary.

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ISSUE 2

From the President

As some of you may know, I have recently been appointed to head the Specialized Services Division of the Department of Rehabilitation.

With this honor comes both a great deal of responsibility and a few sad decisions I have had to make, including resigning from the Board of the Earle Baum Center.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the more than 3 years I have served you, especially as Board President. By the time you read this, I will have presided over new officer elections and helped set the agenda for the next year.

Rest assured your Center is in good shape and, with Allan Brenner at the helm, the campaign to raise money for a new building and to increase services for you will be a success.

It has been wonderful working for you and the Center and I will continue to be a fan forever.

**Tony Candela
Outgoing President**

FALL PREVENTION WORKSHOP ASSESS YOUR RISK OF FALLING

SEPT. 27, 2005 1:30—3pm Room 3

Open to all with concerns about falling, the EBC is offering the opportunity to learn more about your personal risk of falling with ways to reduce it. Guest Presenter- John Johnson RSVP 523-3222

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Details of the event will follow but, please, if you have a chance, join us for the fun.

Plans are well under way to construct two, yes two buildings. In addition to the large multi-purpose building, we are now on the fast track to build an office building. The EBC offices were once Earle Baum's small 2 bedroom house. That small space does not adequately serve our staff (currently 13 and growing). As I write this piece, our architect is submitting the plans to the County and with luck, we will find a way to construct the 2200 foot building quickly. Of course, your help is appreciated and needed.

Finally, I feel honored to have been asked to become a charter board member of the National Council of Private Agencies of the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCPABVI). Although the organization has been in functioning for some time as a networking and support group for CEO's/ Executive Directors of private agencies serving the blind throughout the US, we have now become a non-profit corporation with the intent of using the collective strength and experience of the membership to help improve and influence services nationally. The first board meeting will be in late October followed by a conference of the membership. Many of the best agencies of the US are actively involved with NCPABVI and it is an honor to be chosen to be on the board.

Finally, I want to thank all the volunteers, participants, supporters and staff of the EBC for making it a great place. Spending days on our special grounds with you and being involved with such fabulous people bring me so much joy.

Allan Brenner, Executive Director

Changes By Sean Ryan

Something that everyone needs to realize when going through a life changing experience is that you are not the only person going through it. From my trials I have learned that not only did I go blind but the blindness made me blind to the ones I love. There is always time for the ones that stuck by you and the ones that supported you. Going blind was just another life change and the lesson I have learned is to embrace the change and appreciate those giving support.

We are fortunate to have others around who we love and who love us and with life being so fragile, don't take it all for granted. We must be aware that we are not the only ones suffering while going through our changes. I feel that it is so important to recognize and respect the people closest to us.

I learned the hard way that I was so wrapped up in trying to be the person that I **was** instead of the person I am now, that I became even more blind than before. We are lucky to be pushed to achieve independence and peace within ourselves by those who care for us. Mistreating those who give to us so willingly in tough times is not OK and risking losing the most important relationships because we act like the change is all about us is a mistake.

Nothing can be a greater mistake than failing to recognize and appreciate the most important people in our lives rather than treating them like they are the problem. The worst pain you can possibly experience is that of regret.

I have always preached, "You don't know what you have until you don't have it". There are a lot of greater things out there to lose besides your sight, don't let love and relationships be that loss.

To: Allan Brenner
Tuesday May 17,2005

I wish to thank you and your great staff at the Earle Baum Center for all of your great training and support. As you know I decided to seek training to expand and improve the quality of my life. Even though I have been visually impaired for my whole life I have been legally blind for about 5 years or so. During those years I haven't worked and just basically hoped and prayed for better vision. As my world got smaller and smaller I started to feel like a prisoner in my home and yard. I talked things over with my wife and we decided to have me be home for our youngest daughter, Brenda, to finish high school which she did in June of 2004. I started attending a low vision support group and was told about the Earle Baum Center and so I decided to visit. It happened that I had an eye appointment in San Francisco that week so we stopped by to check you guys out. I was introduced to you and Fontina and was given a tour of the facility. I remember watching everyone walking around with canes and dogs without any help. It left quite an impression. I remember you driving the point home that I needed orientation and mobility training as well as adaptive technology to get my rear back in gear. I left that day with a loan of a CCTV. It was suggested that I get in touch with D.O.R. to get started with training. Linda Scott from D.O.R. sent me down for a low vision evaluation. I then met Jennifer Frazier who is amazing.

Jennifer was so kind and upbeat. She put me through my paces and introduced me to Jaws and the Talking Typer program. She was all over that office showing me different adaptive software. She was so slick that I didn't realize that she was using a cane until we went outside to take me back to where my wife was waiting. Jennifer has always been there to

answer any questions that I had about my computer system and helped via phone to install the typing program. She always makes the effort to say hello when I come down there no matter how busy she is. She is a real go getter.

Jeff Harrington has been so helpful to answer any questions about Jaws commands and computer system compatibility. He has been great to advise my Computer teacher, Colleen Alexander, up in Lake county if we ran in to any questions with Jaws. He even let us come down and gave us a crash course in his method in teaching Jaws and made recommendations for teaching methods and his suggestions really helped. His knowledge and experience was greatly appreciated. He too is always right there when I come down with an out stretched hand and a lot of enthusiasm.

Leslie Bailiff - wow, where do I start? I started mobility training with Leslie in November of 2004. I remember the first day like it was yesterday. She arrived at my door with a smile and before I knew it she had me out on the sidewalk moving up and down the street with this funny stick with a roller tip on it. Everybody I know came out to see what I was doing and wondered who this tall blonde lady was and interrupted our lesson a bunch. I remember thinking that I can't even swing this cane right how in the heck will I ever learn to go anywhere with it alone. Before she left, Leslie gave me my first mobility training. The lesson was, It's a cane, not a stick! She never hesitated to remind me of that fact. Before long she had me going out farther and farther until one day she gave me the mission of going in to the local store and purchasing some Butter Rum life savers for my hard working mobility instructor. It was my first shopping trip on my own in a long, long time. Even though I was supposed to do this mission without her help I always knew she was close by. There was no end to what she had me do. As we expanded

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my training she always had clear plans and goals in mind. She would always scout out just the right area and make sure it was safe, but offered the right challenges. She taught me so many things that I will always remember. The amazing thing is that if I ever was heading towards an obstruction or an unsafe situation this arm would come from nowhere and stop me or redirect me back on course then we would stop and talk about it. Her training was always straight forward and with purpose. She was always on time and always ready to go to work with a positive and pleasant attitude. We had quite a journey from my humble sidewalk to the busy hustle and bustle of Santa Rosa.

Leslie introduced me to public transportation and got me riding the bus all over the place. She was always there when I got to Ukiah and Santa Rosa Transit Mall. She always made sure I got home and at no time did I ever have to worry about ending up alone somewhere. Her lessons were always interesting and even though I needed an occasional kick in the posterior I always looked forward to seeing what she would have me do next. The lessons always had a logical reason and the time was always used completely. Leslie always made sure that a new skill was fully understood before moving on and would often review to make sure. She always gave me 100 percent of her time and was available when I had a problem or question. She taught me more about intersections than I knew there were facts. Since working with Leslie I have been able to do many more things to help out around the house, and the best things is that I can go places and attend more classes when I need to. Leslie even arranged for me to go down to San Rafael to test drive a guide dog. It was a very moving ex-

perience and I realized right away that a guide dog can further open the possibilities of employment opportunity. As I continue to work towards employment, I know if I have any mobility questions I can count on Leslie for any questions that I come across. Her expert methods and dedication have been an inspiration to me to work extra hard and strive for excellence. My final comment is that on my trip to guide dogs I walked all over the campus and found it so rewarding that I could go to an unfamiliar place and make my way around. I also used the skills that Leslie taught me when crossing intersections with the dog. It made the test drive much more worthwhile not having to worry about what to do next. The folks at guide dogs that know Leslie show open respect and kind feelings for Leslie and her abilities.

In closing, Allan I just want to tell you how much I appreciate my association with the Earle Baum Center. You and your staff bring happiness to a lot of people. I think of it as bringing light to our world. I look forward to seeing you all in the future and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend EBC to anyone. I will be happy to talk to anyone who needs some support our wants real life experience about the center or its staff. Please call me anytime if I can do anything to contribute. Thanks Again,

Tom Patton



**Come to the 3rd annual EBC Dog-A-Thon
October 8, 2005**

Gather at 8:30 am @ SRAC

\$20 Advance \$25 Day of Event

**Call for more information and/or
register or donate
707-523-3222**

Paratransit Complaint Line

The EBC has established a complaint telephone line for people in Sonoma County who have issues with their paratransit service.

As a result of regular meetings with the City of Santa Rosa, County of Sonoma and paratransit companies, we determined that it was necessary to establish a means to collect complaints in order to provide the City, County and providers a way to track problems. All complaints are transcribed and sent to the appropriate agencies with voice recordings.

The Paratransit Complaint Line has been useful to the service providers by informing them of problems, allowing them to do necessary follow up with the result being better service to riders. The City is now using the Complaint Line as their de facto complaint process, giving each complaint a tracking number, requiring the resolution or explanation by the paratransit company and responding to the person lodging the complaint within a specified time frame.

In order for the Paratransit Complaint Line to remain effective, it is essential that anyone experiencing any problems with their service use the Complaint Line regardless of the issue.

Each and every complaint should be registered. We have been assured by the City and County that there will be no retribution by the paratransit companies to those leaving complaints.

Paratransit Complaint Line

707 636-2769

BRAILLE

By Judy Johnson

Since I have lost my sight, Braille is sometimes the one thing that pulls it all together for me. It is often said that when one door closes for us, another one will open. For me, Braille has been that one thing that opened up a larger world. I also realize the new door may be different for each person. For some it may be dance, and for others it may be singing, but for me it is definitely Braille.

I have always been an avid reader, and was lost when I could no longer read the printed word. Reading has always been a wonderful experience that would weave a path in and out of the complexities of a good mystery or a hearty laugh from a story that amuses people.

I am amazed that there were people who took the time and energy to create this complex set of symbols that help to shine a bright light in a world of darkness.

Note: This was written by a partially sighted Braille student who is becoming an reader of Braille materials and enjoying reading again.

WANTED

The EBC is in need of a tractor with a pull-behind mower attachment. We have a wonderful crew of volunteers to do the mowing, but our mower is not able to adequately maintain our grounds

If you or someone you know has equipment to donate, it will be gratefully appreciated!

The Earle Baum Center was conceived and established by the blind to provide facilities and services such as education, technology, rehabilitation, health, fitness and recreation, to improve the personal, social and economic condition of the blind and vision impaired.

MISSION STATEMENT

EARLE BAUM CENTRE
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Santa Rosa, CA 95401



FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

Tel: (707) 523-3222 Info line: (707) 636-2769 Fax: (707) 636-2768

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

Upcoming Events
DOGATHON
October 8, 2005
Fall Prevention Workshop
September 27, 2005
Annual Holiday Party
Dec. 15, 2005
11am—3pm
EBC Closed
Dec 19th—Jan 3rd

The EBC wants to thank the Santa Rosa Cycling Club and its' members for hosting a terrific tandem bike ride and barbecue. It was a fun and exhilarating day and a total success. We look forward to many more rides together.
We also want to thank everyone who came through with donations of various items requested in past newsletters and well as generous monetary donations. Your support has made so much possible and without you, our work would be far more difficult to achieve.

