

NO LIMITS



Newsletter for the Earle Baum Center

Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired

From the Center

Conducting work from the new office building is truly a joy. For the first time in our rather short history, every employee has a work space in the same building which makes interactions and communications much easier and natural. We can now speak face to face to share information, niceties and even a meal in our break room. Thank you to everyone who made the construction project so successful. We certainly enjoyed sharing our gratitude at our ribbon cutting ceremony on August 16.

It seems that as soon as one project is complete, three new ones take center stage. We are looking at three major programs that need a significant amount of attention. First, we are considering establishing an offshoot of the EBC, a business that will produce services and/or light manufacturing in order to employ people who are blind and visually impaired in gainful work. This will entail a significant investment of time and money with important goals. We hope to help some people get off the "system" and become totally independent. As many of us know, it is very difficult for someone blind or visually impaired to find good work with fair pay and benefits. Although many employers have the best of intentions, the fear that they will be taking on a costly and untenable situation discourages them from hiring those without sight, particularly in jobs that are significant with growth potential. It seems much easier to

FALL 2006

VOLUME 7

ISSUE 1

hire people who are sighted even though they often lose out on some of the most determined, reliable and loyal employees. As such, the EBC is trying to find a way to establish a competitive business that will help reduce the roughly 70% unemployment of our service population by giving people the opportunity to work, build a real track record and prove that blindness is not grounds for being left out of the workforce. We will keep everyone up to date as on our progress. It will not be easy to build this business but it is a worthy aspiration.

Second, we are in the early stages of a capital campaign to build a multi-purpose building, something that we have discussed in the past. We are seeking major donors and putting together the groundwork before we "go public". This will likely take several years to achieve.

Last but far from least, the EBC must build an endowment in order to assure that in the long run, we are able to meet the needs of the community. Currently, we rely on fee for service from the State and Federal Governments to fund our programs. Demand has grown but the governmental support is limited. If we are to properly serve the thousands of people in our region who need or will need training and support in the future, we must create the means of funding ourselves through donations, planned giving and fundraising activities. One of the most

important things we can do is to build a substantial endowment that will provide funds in perpetuity. When we at the EBC know that we have a good base of operating funds, we will be able to make decisions based upon needs and not funds, something that seems like a dream to me at this time.

The last thing that I want to mention is how thrilled we are to now have a video about the EBC. It will soon be on our web site for general viewing and is also available on a DVD. The short video will be helpful to anyone interested in knowing about the EBC's history and our services as well as seeing our facilities. Contact us if you want a copy on DVD.

Hope your autumn brings with it good health and well being.

**Allan Brenner
Executive Director**

THE BLIND BEAT

It began at Thursday Thinkers three years ago with a special guest and the introduction of a drum circle. Led by Patricia Hatfield, our drummers meet each Wednesday from 9:15 to 10:30 AM.

This exciting and energizing group not only entertains at the EBC, but has played for numerous functions in the community.

If you are interested in joining the group or having the drummers play for your event, contact the EBC Volunteer desk at 636-0082. Cost is \$45 for an 8 week session. Drums are supplied and no previous musical experience is required.

Introduction to Vision Loss Classes

The Earle Baum Center is pleased to announce the start of two new 10 week Introduction to Vision Loss Classes for seniors beginning September 6 in Napa and September 7 in Windsor. The series will cover topics ranging from locating local services, magnification and reading systems and using paratransit to orientation and mobility training and the use of adaptive technology. The free class sessions are held for 10 consecutive weeks and are open to all seniors in the community.

Napa classes are conducted on Wednesdays beginning September 6 from 1:00 to 2:30PM. They are held at the Jefferson Street Senior Apartments, 3400 Jefferson St. in Napa. For more information and registration, contact Sherri Alkem at (707) 258-2927.

Windsor classes are conducted on Thursdays beginning September 7 from 10:30AM to Noon. They are held at Chancellor Place, 907 Adele Dr. in Windsor. For more information and registration, contact Krista at (707) 837-8785.

New Video Premieres at EBC

The new Earle Baum Center video made its debut at the recent ribbon cutting celebration for the new office. This 7 minute presentation tells the story of our development from a farmer's dream to a modern teaching facility. Highlights of the video include footage of Earle Baum working on his farm and interviews with staff members explaining the programs and services currently available. If you would like a DVD copy, please contact us at (707) 523-3222 or at ebc@earlebaum.org. It will soon be available for viewing on our web site at www.earlebaum.org.

Endowment Fund Established

As we near the seventh anniversary of the Earle Baum Center, we can all be very proud of the multitude of achievements of our clients. Because of their commitment to success, many of these individuals are traveling farther and easier than they ever thought possible, remaining in close touch with friends and family through improved communication skills and demonstrating a degree of independence that would make Earle Baum very pleased.

Although these past successes are very gratifying to the EBC faculty, staff and volunteers, it is an appropriate time to focus on the future of the Earle Baum Center. Our current dependence on government agencies to provide a significant portion of our funding not only limits our services, but is also a tenuous foundation for long term financial security. To ensure a solid basis for continuing and expanding these critical programs and services, we are pleased to announce the creation of the Earle Baum Center Endowment Fund. The earnings of this fund will provide a solid base of operating funds for the decades ahead and is an essential step toward bringing long term financial security to the EBC.

To begin the process, the Earle Baum Center is pleased to announce our first matching grant of \$25,000 from the Schulz Donor Advised Fund. For every dollar donated, up to a total of \$25,000, an equal amount will be donated from this fund. Simply put, your contribution of \$20.00 will bring \$40.00 into the EBC. Should you wish to make a more significant contribution, we welcome donations in the form of additional matching grants. Where else can you provide so much needed assistance while inspiring others to join you in your generosity?

Whatever your level of involvement, the staff, volunteers and clients of the Earle Baum Center thank you for providing opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired throughout Northern California. Please contact our development office for additional information.

New Drugs and Therapies Available

Rapid advances in medical technology have brought new treatments and promises of new treatment to the forefront of vision loss medicine. Foremost is a new eye drug that has shown promise in treating the wet form of age-related macular degeneration. As with all new medications, it is best to discuss any drug's appropriateness for your condition with your doctor.

Vehicle Donations Sought

The EBC drivers are currently using several vehicles that are in need of replacement. We are asking for donations of late model used or new sedans or mini vans that are reliable and in good working condition. If you have a vehicle that is no longer needed and are happy to know that it will be used to benefit people who are blind and visually impaired, please let us know. Not only is your donation tax deductible, but every click of the odometer will indicate that you are helping make a difference.

Further, you might recall our plea for a small tractor with a pull behind mower. We currently are using a small sit-down mower to do the job of a tractor, which does not work well. If you are able to donate a tractor that can keep our extensive fields well maintained, our volunteer who work on the fields will be so grateful.

Ribbon Cutting a Great Success



The **Earle Baum Center** staff, faculty and volunteers gathered on Wednesday, August 16 to thank our many friends in the community for helping create the **EBC's** new administration and office building. Many of the contractors and donors who contributed to this success, as well as representatives of the local press, spent the morning taking tours, talking with staff and faculty and enjoying sparkling wine, lemonade and hors d'oeuvres.

As ex-Board President and current Deputy Director of the Specialized Services Division, California Dept. of Rehabilitation, Tony Candela officially opened the new facility with much praise for the achievements of the EBC and the cutting of the red ribbon. About 75 people attended the celebration, including a hot dog lunch after the ceremony. Thanks go out to all of the dedicated members of the Earle Baum Center community, whose constant support and generosity have made it possible to provide our essential programs to an ever expanding population.

Meet the Board – Part 2

Any non-profit organization is only as strong as its Board of Directors and one of the pillars of our great Board is Shannon Barker, a board member for the past four years. Shannon was born and raised in Sonoma County and received her degree in Business at Sonoma State University. She brings ten years of accounting experience as well as a knowledge of local issues and challenges to the board. As a CPA, her experience lies in auditing mid-sized manufacturers and non-profits for Moss Adams LLP. Shannon is responsible for assessing the overall fiscal health of our organization, managing the yearly financial statement audit, creating and monitoring the budget. Additionally, she works closely with the Department of Rehabilitation to ensure proper reporting compliance.



Shannon lives with her husband DeWitt and daughter Gwen in Santa Rosa.



Earle Baum Center
Serving the Blind & Visually Impaired
Walk for Independence
& Dog-A-Thon 2006

Oct. 14 - EVENT REGISTRATION

\$20 Advance Registration (by Oct. 11, 2006)

\$25 Registration (after Oct. 11, 2006)

**Registration includes: Collectable Event T-Shirt, Breakfast, Silent Auction,
Dog Games, Children's Activities, and MORE**

Sign-in tables open at 8:00 am, walk begins promptly at 9:00 am

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **e-mail:** _____

Waiver & Release for Walkers

In consideration of the acceptance of any entry, I, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I have or may have against the organizers of this event, its principals, its employees, all sponsors and their representatives and any and all claims of damages, demands, actions whatsoever in any manner, as a result of my participation in the Walk for independence, including travel to and from this event. I attest and verify that I am physically fit and have sufficiently trained for the completion of the event and I have not been advised otherwise by a qualified medical person, Further, I hereby grant full permission to any and all of the foregoing to use my name and likeness in any broadcast, telecast, video or print media of the event without compensation to me.

Signature: X _____ **Date:** _____

All entrants (parent/guardian if under 18) must sign.

Submit (checks payable to):

**Earle Baum Center
4539 Occidental Rd.,
Santa Rosa CA 95401**

Registration Fee Collected: _____

Date Received: _____



Earle Baum Center
 Serving the Blind & Visually Impaired
Walk for Independence
& Dog-A-Thon 2006

Saturday, October 14

Raising funds to sustain the many programs and activities of the Earle Baum Center of the Blind. All donations are appreciated and tax deductible. Event participants must complete the Registration Form.

Please submit Donation Form and donations to the EBC by October 12, 2006

Donation Collector

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: ____ **Zip:** _____ **e-mail:** _____

Donations are tax deductible: Make checks payable to The Earle Baum Center
Submit to Earle Baum Center, 4539 Occidental Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

DONOR NAME	ADDRESS CITY & ZIP	PHONE	DONATION	PAID
1				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

TOTAL PLEDGES: \$ _____

Earle Baum Center of the Blind Means the World to Me

Claire G. Spector

The Earle Baum Center of the Blind is a welcoming place. The entire EBC program, its staff and volunteers, have helped me on the road to making peace with my vision differences and getting on with my life.

I discovered the Earle Baum Center in November, 2005. Two serious accidents in the preceding four months had left me unable to read. Though rehabbing, I just wanted to find out about computer software that could read printed text and take dictation so I could return to work.

Earle Baum staff member Jennifer Frazier received me warmly and took the time to refer me to the California Department of Rehabilitation. Happily, a few months later, my DOR counselor sent me back to the Earle Baum Center for evaluation, support and training.

My vision changed very suddenly. In June, 2005, on a sunny day, I was sitting studying for the July California Bar Exam while waiting for well-care appointment when a huge Mediterranean Stone pine tree simply fell over and crushed my van with me in it. Less than three months later, a young man with no driver's license cut across traffic after exiting a shopping center at full speed hit the car I was driving. Recent brain scans confirm that I have a traumatic brain injury that affects my visual information processing pathways, balance and cognition. Living with "Cognitive Visual Impairment" or "Visual Inefficiency" causes me to function in the world as a blind person must.

First, Leslie Bailiff and, now Lora Monemzadeh, Earle Baum Orientation and Mobility professionals, have given me the cane and mobility skills to be safe and confident in getting around on my own. Dr. Susan Hirshfield's class, *Living with Vision Loss*, has been instrumental in helping me come to terms with my vision differences and make the necessary emotional adjustments and transitions in a very different world.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, Denise Vancil's class, *Introduction to Vision Loss*, imparts practical day-to-day skills and "work-arounds" necessary to live a full and independent life. Technology Specialists Barb Potts, Jennifer Frazier and Jacques Law have helped me to evaluate adaptive technologies and now Jacques is my EBC software trainer.

All along the way, EBC administrators, staff and an extended community of volunteers and grads, have been there to encourage and assist me with the perspective necessary to advocate effectively and take good care of myself.

I continue to work daily with my team of medical, vision, chiropractic and naturopathic doctors and therapists, my DOR Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind, and Earle Baum Center staff and consultants. With their consistent support, I will have the tools and skills to take an accommodated Certification course for attorneys and accountants. This will allow me to return to work as a financial specialist in Collaborative Practice until such time as I am able to study for, and pass, an accommodated CA Bar exam.

I am very grateful for Earle Baum and the Center that proudly bears his name. His vision lives on in this very special place and its truly good and unselfish work.



EARLE BAUM CENTER
4539 Occidental Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND

MISSION STATEMENT

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

New Medical Study

The American Council of the Blind in collaboration with Harvard University and Brigham and Women's Hospital is conducting a study to determine if there is a reduced breast cancer risk among women who are blind. All women who are legally blind are eligible to participate. The one to two hours survey is available in a variety of accessible formats and on line at www.bvihealthsurvey.com. For more information or survey forms, contact Beryl Brown at volunteer@earlebaum.org or at (707) 636-0082.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Oct 3, 2006 - 1 pm

"Take Back the Streets"

March & rally to create safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists. Courthouse Square and Juilliard Park

Dog-A-Thon 2006

October 14

8am-2pm

Save the Date!

Contact information: www.earlebaum.org

Tel: (707) 523-3222

Fax: (707) 636-2768