

LINKS

Learning • Innovation • Networking • Knowledge • Sharing



Front Row (left to right): John Thompson, Billy Henry, Bob Brinckerhoff, Maxine Creel (Renee's Mother), Renee Vidrine, Bernadette Kappen, Gidget Hopf, Janet Berry, John Berry (Janet's Husband), and Amada Weldon. Back Row (left to right): Miki Jordan, Wells Jones, Dan Needham, Bob Scheffel. Doug Fowler, Ken Warkentin

The CEO Summit Through the Eyes of a New Member

By Diana Trapani, Scholarship Recipient, BVI Center of Monterey County

Forty-six leaders gathered at the Garden of the Gods Resort in Colorado Springs, for the first annual CEO Summit. The resort sits on a mesa overlooking the breathtaking Garden of the Gods National Natural Landmark, with Pikes Peak towering in the background.

Tuesday April 26: My husband and I drove from Denver, where I was warmly welcomed to the VisionServe Alliance family of leaders, at a dinner for Board Members where I began gathering information about programming, budgets,

continued on page 4

CEO Corner

Roxann Mayros

VisionServe Alliance
St. Louis, MO



Summertime

And the livin' is easy

Fish are jumpin'

And the cotton is high

This is the opening stanza from the well-

known Gershwin song "Summertime," a song I hum all summer long as it reminds me of long days, walks and hikes, bike rides, picnics at local wineries, and grilling

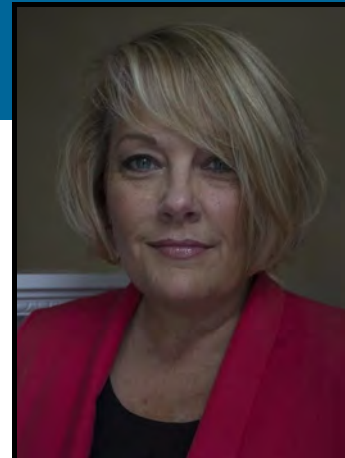
every night on our deck. Even with summer fun, there is still much going on at VisionServe Alliance and at some of our member organizations. In this issue of LINKS, you will meet our newest employee, Carolyn Lloyd, who has jumped in feet first planning 2017 conferences and learning about this "blindness biz." You will also read about Envision's Research Institute, Perkin's new social media campaign, and leadership lessons learned by "tough-mudders" Erika and Mark. I wish you a summer with easy living and fish that are jumping high.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Roxann Mayros.

Introducing New Executive Director

Carolyn Lloyd

VisionServe Alliance
Saint Louis, MO



Welcome Carolyn Lloyd, who started as VisionServe Alliance's Executive Director last month. Carolyn will produce the CEO Summit and the Fall Conference, direct social media, communications and fundraising, manage business operations, and in the long-term, develop educational opportunities via webinars, call-ins and more. Carolyn comes to us with experience in corporate relations, annual giving, major gifts, communications and event planning. She has extensive experience managing executive level committees and volunteer groups. Her previous positions were held at Washington University School of Medicine, BJC HealthCare and the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, a world class research institute located in St. Louis, Missouri.

Carolyn and her husband Marc live in St. Louis. They have four children ranging from 17 to 24 years of age. She is a musician and likes to spend her free time hiking

and kayaking with her family.

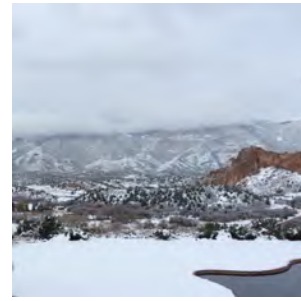
Although she is new to the field of vision loss, she is passionate and deeply committed to VisionServe's mission to strengthen services for people who are blind or visually impaired. She looks forward to meeting you in person and learning how VisionServe can be a greater strength to your organization. In the interim, if you have any ideas you would like to share or need assistance, feel free to contact her. She would love to hear from you!

Carolyn Toft Lloyd

clloyd@visionservealliance.org

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Pictures of Our First CEO Summit In Colorado Springs



The CEO Summit Through the Eyes of a New Member *continued from cover*



Mike Bina
Maryland School for the Blind
Lou Tutt
AER

Paul Slone
Cabell-Wayne
Association of the
Blind

Ed Jacobs, Sponsor
RMLEB
Shari Roeseler
Society for the Blind Sacramento

Loretta Himmelsbach
Wisconsin Council of the Blind & VI
Steve Pouliot
Vermont Association f/t Blind & VI

fundraising, staffing, boards and so much more!

Wednesday April 27: After a morning of sightseeing in old Colorado City, I met my assigned meeting mentor Kathleen Zeider President of ACVREP, who shared a wealth of information about certification, staffing options, professionals, other organizations, and income ideas.

The first time attendee reception, that evening provided a wonderful opportunity to get to know other new members in a small group setting. It was followed by The Summit kick-off, a welcome reception, where I met leaders from across the country.

Thursday April 28: The learning continued with an in-depth training on ethics,

presented by Sheri Roeseler from the Society for the Blind in Sacramento. This important and informative training will assist us as leaders in case we encounter issues in our organizations.

Following lunch, we engaged in discussions about boards, committees and structures, staffing, and certifications. This was followed by break-out groups to tackle big issues impacting the field of blindness and visual impairment including national synergy, fundraising, collaborative projects, and succession planning.

I joined the fundraising group to learn what other organizations are doing in this area and consider what might work for my organization. Since most of us are looking for new income streams, this was a valuable sharing of information.

The late afternoon was open for a variety of healthy networking opportunities including yoga, a nature walk, golf, and a jeep tour. A fantastic BBQ dinner was held at the Phantom Canyon Brewing Company located in a historical four-story building. Motivational speaker and experienced climber, Jim Davidson, shared his incredible stories of survival from a snow bridge collapse which took the life of his climbing partner, and his experience at Base Camp 1 on Mt. Everest when the April 2015 earthquake struck Nepal.

Jim's stories of resilience, perseverance and hope are relevant to our work in the blind and visually impaired field. His message of facing life's adventures and overcoming adversity, harnessing one's inner strength

The CEO Summit Through the Eyes of a New Member



Shelly Taylor
Louisiana Association for the Blind



Mike Bina
Maryland School for the Blind
Ben Goodrich
Judo Paralympics



Front Row: **Bernadette Kappen, Miki Jordan, Denny Moyer, Loretta Himmelsbach, & Kathie Zeider**
Back Row: **Doug Fowler, & Steve Pouliot**

and rebounding from setbacks can take us on challenges outside our comfort zones and help us find a way to succeed.

He said, "In challenging times individuals need to face adversity with courage, persevere through repeated challenges, and overcome uncertainty. The key to success is resilience." Thank you Jim for an inspirational evening!

Friday April 29: We woke to snowfall before traveling to the U. S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Wow, what an experience! Here we learned about the U.S. Paralympic's and strategies for encouraging healthy living through sports, recreation and physical activity for our clients.

During lunch we met three

visually impaired Paralympic athletes who shared their Olympic dreams with us.

Of course, there was time for shopping in the Olympic gift shop, before venturing back to the resort where we broke into groups by organization size for conversation about matters unique to centers of similar size.

Saturday April 30: The snow continued throughout the night and we woke to about five inches of snow, making the Garden of the Gods red rocks jump out against the white backdrop. The views were stunning! We wrapped up the conference with a review of our ethics training, and a sharing of agency and related news in the field of low vision and blindness services.

Attendees told me that this is a very collegial group

*"Many thanks
to VSA who
provided me
with a
scholarship"*

who do not hesitate to share information. Why re-invent the wheel when they are happy to share the lessons learned and outcomes. I experienced just this throughout the conference and have no doubt my involvement with VisionServe Alliance and its members will be of great benefit. In fact, I've already reached out and have received helpful responses.

Many thanks to VSA who provided me with a scholarship without which I would not have been able to attend.

What Are Your Favorites?

Fontaine M. Huey fhuey@cviga.org

Center for the Visually
Impaired

What do you do in your downtime?

I love to knit -- it is meditative, creative, and productive all at the same time.

What are you reading, watching and/or listening to?

Reading: I am re-reading all of the Harry Potter books straight through.
Watching: "Madame Secretary"

What is your best guilty pleasure?

Watching Antiques Roadshow. I love the stories behind the objects.

Tell us about one item on your bucket list?

Spend a week in a bona fide (but updated!) castle and pretend that I have servants at my beck and call.

"If I didn't work in this field, I would have"

Run a community theatre. I might just do that in retirement!



The best advice I ever got was ...

"Don't believe everything you hear," from my dad. A simple but profound statement.

My best childhood memory is ...

Camping (and swimming and water skiing and fishing) at Bass Lake near Yosemite National Park.

Member News

Send your news to media@visionservealliance.org.

BlindNewWorld is sponsored by **Perkins School for the Blind**, where Helen Keller challenged and dramatically changed society's perceptions of individuals with disabilities. Founded in 1829, Perkins is the leading global enterprise dedicated to advancing the lives of the young blind population through education, accessibility and innovation.

Americans' Attitudes Toward the Blind: By the Numbers



A recent **Perkins School** for the Blind study surveyed 1,000 people of all ages around the country. Among the findings:

- 80 percent feel sorry for the blind
- 53 percent say they are uncomfortable around blind people
- 82 percent think the blind can't play sports
- 81 percent think the blind can't babysit
- 70 percent believe people who can't see can't shop for clothes
- 46 percent say they cannot think of a worse condition than blindness — including

terminal illness and Alzheimer's disease

- Only 28 percent think a person who is blind could do the respondent's job

Thus, the birth of BlindNewWorld, the first-ever blind awareness social change campaign designed to demystify blindness and break down the barriers to inclusion — discomfort, pity, fear and stigma. "All the education in the world won't help our young adults succeed if society is not ready to accept them. We need everyone to accept the people in their communities who are visually impaired in order to eliminate some of the biggest barriers

to employment and independence." says Dave Power, President.

Through provocative PSA mini-films, new statistics on public attitudes, compelling stories and social dialogue, BlindNewWorld seeks to disrupt stereotypes and inspire the sighted population to open its eyes to the full social, professional and academic capabilities of the blind population.

To share this exciting campaign on your social media sites, go to www.BlindNewWorld.org.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"

- Helen Keller

Member News

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Envision Unveils New Research Facility

Envision welcomed state, city and county officials, business leaders and donors to its headquarters in downtown Wichita, Kansas last month for the grand opening of the Envision Research Institute (ERI). Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, Wichita Mayor Jeff Longwell and several VisionServe Alliance members were among those who joined Michael Monteferrante to show their support.

Under Michael's leadership, research has become an important part of Envision's mission to improve the quality of life and provide inspiration. The Envision Research Institute will dedicate its research to investigating the functional implications of vision loss, early screening and access to treatments, optimizing rehabilitation therapies and developing accessibility technology.

The establishment of the ERI, invites an unprecedented opportunity for Executive Director, Laura Walker, PhD, the scientific staff and many

affiliates and collaborators who have long awaited the chance to fully engage in meaningful and applied low vision research.

"Our goal is for eye care practitioners to never again tell a patient there is nothing more they can do. There is always more that can be done, and that's called low vision rehabilitation," Dr. Walker said. "The Envision Research Institute is creating a link between researchers, clinicians and educational teams. Our unique access to the Envision Vision Rehabilitation Clinic, Envision Child Development Center, Envision Industries and Envision's global network of contacts in the vision care community will help us ask the most meaningful and impactful questions, identify how those with vision loss

want and need to interact with the world and to remove the functional barriers that stand in their way."

Through partnerships with national researchers and internal research programs, Envision Research Institute will work diligently to push breakthroughs in vision research that have immediate and practical implications for those who are blind or low vision.

Meet Dr. Laura Walker at VisionServe Alliance's Fall Conference in San Antonio, TX November 2-5, 2016.



What's On My Desk!

Chris Faust CFaust@clovernook.org
Clovernook Center for the
Blind and Visually Impaired

*"Amidst the maze of it all,
are reminders of why I do
what I do each day!"*



Some days I wonder what isn't on my desk! It serves as a catchment of sorts, for all things Clovernook – a true reflection of this organization and the people that strive to make it great. Laced throughout that reflection are remnants of completed projects, existing projects, and notebooks thick with thoughts and goals for the future. And, amidst the maze of it all, are reminders of why I do what I do each day.

I have a collection of Braille books and magazines, reminding me of the unique purpose we serve as one of the largest braille publishers in the United States, with over 25 million pages published annually. And, although it can be a rat race – sometimes even a wild goose chase – I have a few animals

of my own sitting on my desk, animals hand sculpted by blind and visually impaired artist in our Recreation program. Finally, for those extra-long days that necessitate a snack, I have a plate of brownies; unfortunately, they're the kind that never go stale, and are guaranteed to break your teeth, another artistic ruse, by our talented artists.

Some days it's hard to believe there is a desk under all the books and binders and papers – but underneath it all, it has become a true reflection of this place that has become my world. Like my desk, I have become submerged in the mission and vision of Clovernook. Our consumers are second to none, and the most important thing on my desk will always



be the reminder of our mission "to empower people who are blind and visually impaired to be self-sufficient and full participants in their communities," as we strive to engage minds, enable hands, and enrich lives.

Member News

Send submissions to media@visionservealliance.org.



Leadership Lessons from the Mud



VisionServe members Mark Lucas of USABA and Erica Arbogast of Bind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh participated as teammates in a Tough Mudder. The race is a 10-12 mile mud and obstacle course designed to drag you out of your comfort zone by testing your physical strength, stamina, and mental grit. It's not about how fast you can cross the finish line, but rather a challenge that emphasizes teamwork, camaraderie, and accomplishing something almost as tough as you are. Mark and Erica shared with us the insights they gained after the race!

Erika's Recap: We need other people. There were many times throughout the race that Mark offered to help me and I turned him down. Why... because I was strong enough and could do it myself. There were many

times that I knew I needed Mark's help and gladly accepted his assistance, but also many times I turned it down. I think about times later in the race that I was so completely exhausted that I wasn't sure I could go on.

If I had accepted that help when I thought I could do it on my own, maybe I would have had more energy in the moments where I thought I couldn't go on. Maybe I would have finished the race with less bruises and fewer aches and pains in the days following. As leaders we are used to being able to do most things on our own and we definitely have the capacity to do it. The question is, would accepting help from someone else when we don't NEED it, allow us to accomplish something else or make it through the journey feeling less exhausted.

Mark's Recap: In the Spartan Race, Erika and I set out to finish as a team. Not finishing,

was not an option. As in our work, family life, relationships, etc., we need people along the way to help us get to our pre-determined goal(s). Even though the race was extremely challenging and at times grueling and at times we wanted to quit, it was important to have fun and celebrate our success along each challenging obstacle. My teammate, who flew all the way out from Pittsburgh to Colorado Springs, motivated me to do my best. And each time I boosted her over a 8-10' climbing wall, I would find the first identified strongest competitor to boost me over the wall. What was re-enforced; surround yourself with great business partners, rely on them and your team to get the job done, and others to assist while passionately enjoying the ride to work hard to accomplish your goals and dreams.

Do You Know...

You get BIG savings and benefits with First Nonprofit Group?

In addition to BIG savings you will receive free background checks and cyber-security protection when you move to First Nonprofit Group for your unemployment insurance.



That member employees can apply for scholarships from VisionServe?

We offer academic scholarships to the employees of our current members. The funds are used to pursue a Master's degree in Vision Rehabilitation, O&M, Nonprofit Management, or ACVREP Certification.



That member's can access past issues of LINKS on our website?

After logging into the Membership Access portion of the VisionServe Alliance website, visit the "Information to Use" page and click VisionServe Alliance Newsletter. There you will find issues dating back to 2011.



That VisionServe's Strategic Plan is entitled "Member Priority Goals"?

You will find them posted in the member's only section of our website. Each year, beginning in 2013, is available for our members to review.



Our Mission

To engage leaders in building a better world through services for people with vision loss.

Our Vision

To be a leader and a unified voice in the field for advocacy, education, ethical management, professional growth and enhanced services.

Our Purpose

To build and nurture a diverse core of future and current leaders within a healthy and vibrant network of private nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada whose commitment is to enrich the lives of those living with vision loss and to remove the barriers to the pursuit of opportunities.

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VisionServe Alliance Fall Conference

San Antonio, TX November 2-5, 2016

Deep in the Heart!



San Antonio is known as a favorite vacation destination. See why as you wander the downtown River Walk.



VisionServe Alliance CEO Summit

Charleston, SC April 2017

Southern Charm and the Historic City



Bursting with Southern charm and hospitality this city feels suspended in time as you are inspired by it's beauty.

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