

# Parent to Parent

For Parents and Families of Students in  
Kentucky who are Blind and Visually  
Impaired

Winter 2010

Kentucky School for the Blind

Family Support Center, Member of Parent Resource Centers of KY



## Post Secondary Experience Available for HS Students through INSIGHT

*By: Chad Hunt, OFB Vocational  
Rehabilitation Counselor; Kristen  
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Wilderness Trail and Mitch Dahmke,  
KSB Family Support Specialist*

What is the INSIGHT Post Secondary  
Preparation Program? That's a question  
that is often asked, but very few  
students who are blind and visually impaired and their parents have the  
answer.

**INSIGHT is a unique program designed to provide students with visual  
impairments/blindness the opportunities and experiences encountered  
when entering a post-secondary educational setting.**

In existence for four years, INSIGHT is held during the summer at Morehead  
State University (MSU). The main focus of INSIGHT is to prepare high school  
students who are blind and visually impaired for college life. This is done by  
making the INSIGHT experience as comprehensive, realistic and safe for the  
students in the program.

INSIGHT is for students who have just completed their junior year of high  
school however sophomores and seniors may apply. While at MSU, the  
participants live in dorm rooms with roommates, attend a class for a week  
(yes, homework is included), receive student I.D. cards, attend orientation  
classes, are involved in sports/recreational activities, learn study skills, talk  
with current college students with visual impairments, do their own laundry,



*2009 INSIGHT participants take time out of  
their busy schedule for a group photo.*

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etc. Previous INSIGHT participants note that students won't be bored and that they will learn valuable information about what is expected of a fulltime college student.

As you might imagine, INSIGHT takes a significant amount of preparation and support. Six partner agencies—the Kentucky Office for the Blind, Big East Educational Cooperative, Morehead State University, the University of Louisville, KSB, and the Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation comprise the core of the planning committee. The program also receives assistance from the Morehead Lions Club.

INSIGHT was started to help college bound students with visual impairments achieve their goals of attending college and obtaining a degree. Over the past four years, INSIGHT has had approximately ten participants per year. The program can accommodate up to 20 students. INSIGHT occurs in late May or early June.

**Here are some enlightening INSIGHT statistics:**

**Total Participants: 34** (2 attended INSIGHT for two years)

**Participants who will graduate high school in 2010 or 2011: 9**

A survey was sent to participants who attended INSIGHT during 2006-2008. 19 surveys were returned. This is what it reveal:

**INSIGHT Participants Currently Enrolled in College: 16** (11 are attending the University of Louisville or MSU)

**Attended College but not Currently Enrolled: 1** (Deceased- terminal illness)

**Did not Enroll in College: 2**

Questions were posed to past attendees Bret Dahmke (2006) from Spencer County and Tim Hunt (2008) from Greenup County.

**What year in high school were you when you attended INSIGHT?**

*Tim – “I was going into my junior year of high school when I attended.”*

*Bret – “I was going into my senior year.”*

**What were your thoughts about attending college after high school? Did the INSIGHT program influence your decision either for or against attending college?**

*Tim – “I knew even at that time I would be going to college, but I was very nervous about it and I was unsure if I would be able to go away to college. The INSIGHT program didn't influence my decision in the sense that I wanted to go, but it helped alleviate some of the nervousness about going to college. It did help show me what characteristics I wanted the college I would attend to have.”*

*Bret – “I would have to say that attending the INSIGHT program was very helpful. It gave me a good idea of how college would be much different than*

high school. There is a huge difference that I experienced first hand rather than having someone tell me about the difference. The program actually made my decision concerning college clear about where I wanted to go and what my goal was going to be."

### **What INSIGHT activity or activities benefited you the most?**

Tim – "Personally, one of the things that benefited me the most was the social interaction with other individuals. This helped me to become more of an advocate for myself because I was in charge of my own life."

Bret – "Getting to go to a couple of classes simply to observe was of great benefit to me. It gave me a good idea of what a college class would be like. Also, meeting with some of the university professors was terrific. One of the professors explained to me what would be expected of me, not just as a student, but a student with a visual impairment. One of the best things I came away from INSIGHT with was the knowledge that you have to advocate

## **2010 INSIGHT Post Secondary Preparation Program June 5-12, 2010**

**Deadline for Application is March 15, 2010**

**Postmark Deadline is March 10, 2010**

**For more information visit:**

**<http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Resources/INSIGHT%202010.htm>**

for yourself. INSIGHT also provided me with a great chance to work on my communication skills."

### **Do you feel that INSIGHT is worthwhile for students to attend? Would you recommend INSIGHT to other students with visual impairments?**

Tim – "Yes, the program is definitely worthwhile. I do recommend the program to other visually impaired students and will continue to do so because it is a very good teaching tool. It helps high school students get "a taste" of college life and shows them what they may need to work on before being able to have a successful life."

Bret – "INSIGHT is a great program and was very worthwhile. I recommend it to any high school student that has a visual impairment that is thinking about going to college. It may help a student more ways in which it helped me. If there are some worries about attending college that a student has, what better way to learn and experience could there be than to participate in the INSIGHT program. As I said before, I would DEFINITELY RECOMMEND

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*INSIGHT to any visually impaired student thinking about furthering their education. It was a great experience and a terrific chance to meet new people and learn about real life in a controlled setting."*

**The 2010 INSIGHT will be held June 5–12.** Information on how to apply can be found on the KSB website at <http://www.ksb.k12.ky.us/Resources/INSIGHT%202010.htm>. Students who apply for the program, must complete and return all of the forms posted on the INSIGHT. **Applications are to be submitted by March 15** to Kristen Hammond, PO Box 714, Lancaster, KY 40444. For more information, contact Hammond at 859-339-5747, [kristen.hammond@kedc.org](mailto:kristen.hammond@kedc.org) or [Kristen.hammond@ksb.kyschools.us](mailto:Kristen.hammond@ksb.kyschools.us).

## **OFB Honors Employees, Consumers and Partners**

*Reprinted with permission from the Kentucky Office for the Blind*

The Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) Executive Director Christopher Smith presented 17 department awards to outstanding consumers, partners and employees of the agency at its awards banquet held recently [Nov. 9, 2009] at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort.

"Today we recognized staff for their commitment, partners for their support, and consumers who remain focused and driven toward their goals," Smith said. "In these challenging economic times, OFB is taking action and leading change in order to assure quality services for every individual we serve."

OFB is a state government rehabilitation agency in the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet that offers assistance to persons who are blind or visually impaired and also provides services for employers. Last year, 2,556 people in Kentucky were served by the agency.



The following is a list of 2009 OFB award winners.

**VOCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT** – The award recognizes a person with a visual impairment who has successfully completed services and overcome obstacles to find employment. The following awards were given: **Abby**

*Mike Hall (left) accepts the Charles W. McDowell Award from OFB Executive Director Chris Smith.*



*Abby Cocanougher (right), Boyle County, is the recipient of a Vocational Achievement Award from OFB. With her is OFB Counselor Janell Turner.*

**Cocanougher**, Boyle County; **William “Tony” Daugherty**, Daviess County; **Donald Gerard, Jr.**, Warren County; **LeAnn Hillard**, Clay County; and **Brian Mullins**, Jefferson County.

**BETTY J. NICELEY INDEPENDENT LIVING** – Recognizes a consumer’s perseverance in dealing with a visual impairment. **Charles McGehee**, McLean County, and **James Yonts**, Muhlenberg County, each received the award.

**MICHAEL P. BELL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR** – Goes to the rehabilitation counselor who has demonstrated over a two-year period exemplary job performance. As a result, the counselor assists a high number of consumers in obtaining quality employment. This year’s recipient is **Norma McCormick**, Prestonsburg.

**FLORENCE M. TERRY COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR** – goes to the rehabilitation counselor who has demonstrated exemplary performance in working with consumers toward the goal of maximizing their independent skills in home and community. This year’s recipient is **Devona Ashley**, Owensboro.

**PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR** – recognizes dedication to the mission of the OFB to assist people with visual impairments in becoming more independent and productive in the workplace, community and home. The following were awarded this year: **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**, Franklin County; **Federal Correctional Institution**, Boyd County; **Eastern Kentucky University**, Madison County; and **Southeastern Kentucky Rehabilitation Industries (SEKRI)**, Harlan County.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE** – is given in recognition of a staff member that has shown stellar performance in one or more areas relating to the work of their position with the Office for the Blind. As a result of their performance there was a positive impact on the agency and consumers served. This year’s recipient is **Kent Jones**, orientation and mobility instructor, Louisville.

**THE EAGLE** – is given in recognition of a staff person who has diligently worked to place individuals into competitive employment. The criterion for receiving this award is based upon placing significantly disabled individual receiving social security disability into substantial gainful employment defined by the social security system. This year’s winners include **Silver Eagle Winner Norma McCormick**, vocational rehabilitation counselor, Prestonsburg; and **Bronze Eagle Winner Twyla Hammons**, vocational rehabilitation counselor, Somerset.



*KSB World of Work teacher Bo Mullins was honored by OFB with a Vocational Achievement Award. With him is his OFB Counselor Norma McCormick. She was honored with the Michael B. Bell Counselor and Silver Eagle Awards.*

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# News about Kentucky FCBVI Groups

## Big East Region

The Big East Families of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired (FCBVI) had a Fall Family Retreat for families residing in Eastern Kentucky on Oct. 4. The day long retreat was held at Serenity Acres in Greenup County.

There were a lot of activities, so many in fact, that time did not allow for all to be carried out. Teacher of the Visually Impaired Karen Hinkle from Greenup County conducted an orientation and mobility scavenger hunt. There were craft tables, game tables, pumpkin decorating, a caramel apple making station and beep corn hole. A wiener roast was held over an open campfire



*Left photo: Danielle Burton from Elliott County tries her hand at beep corn hole as her dad Rick Burton looks on. Center: The highlight of the day was when Donalda Harper (seated) and her daughter Cheyenne (seated) got wild and crazy with craft materials. Right: The Big East FCBVI enjoys a hayride.*

and s' mores were made for dessert. The retreat concluded with a hayride conducted by the staff of Serenity Acres.

These sponsors helped in making the retreat a success: Big East FCBVI; Dr. Laura Reece, Orthopedic Surgery & Family Practice – Ashland; Foodland – South Shore; The Apple Orchard – South Shore; Flatwoods Lions Club; Lab Computers – Louisville; Big East Educational Cooperative; and KSB Family Support Center.

## Northern Kentucky

On Oct. 22, Kentucky Association of Blind Athletes Executive Director Kenny Jones gave a presentation on recreational and sporting opportunities for children and adults who are blind and visually impaired to the Northern Kentucky FCBVI. His presentation focused on beep baseball and goalball.

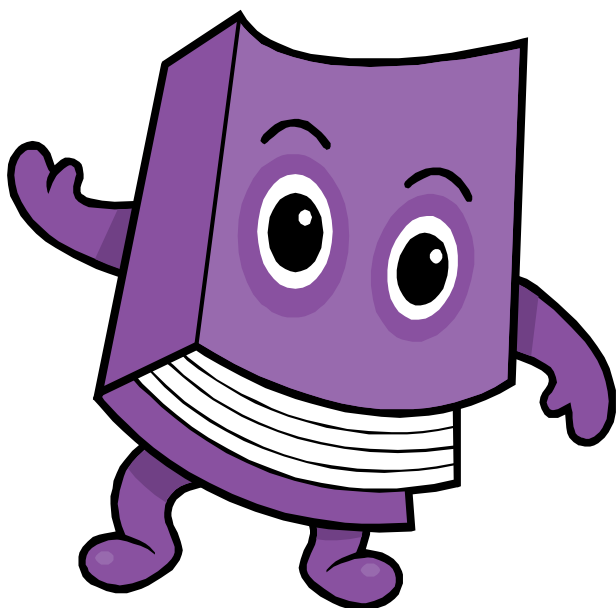
## Western Kentucky

Introductory FCBVI meetings were held in Paducah and Nortonville on Nov. 26 and 27. The next meetings have not been scheduled. Families will be notified about future meetings from the KSB Family Support Center and from teachers of the visually impaired in Western Kentucky.

## Tumble Book Interactive Library Offers Literacy Fun

By: Mitch Dahmke

My good friends from Northern Kentucky tipped me off to an excellent website that includes: storybooks that are animated and have sounds and highlights



for all levels; puzzles and games including jigsaw puzzles, word catch, memory game, match the sequence, spelling and others; language activities such as books written in French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and Russian; and audio books for upper elementary and middle school students.

This website is terrific for any primary age students to 12 years. The web address is [http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/asp/home\\_tumblebooks.asp](http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/asp/home_tumblebooks.asp).

*Check it out. Your child will be glad you did!*

*OFB Honors Employees, Consumers and Partners ... continued from page 5:*

**CHARLES W. McDOWELL** – recognizes exemplary work and significant contributions from an OFB career employee that has had a major impact on services for the blind and visually impaired across the state. This year's winner is **Mike Hall**, vocational rehabilitation counselor, Prestonsburg.

*Parent to Parent* is a quarterly publication containing information relevant to Kentucky parents and families of children who are blind and visually impaired.

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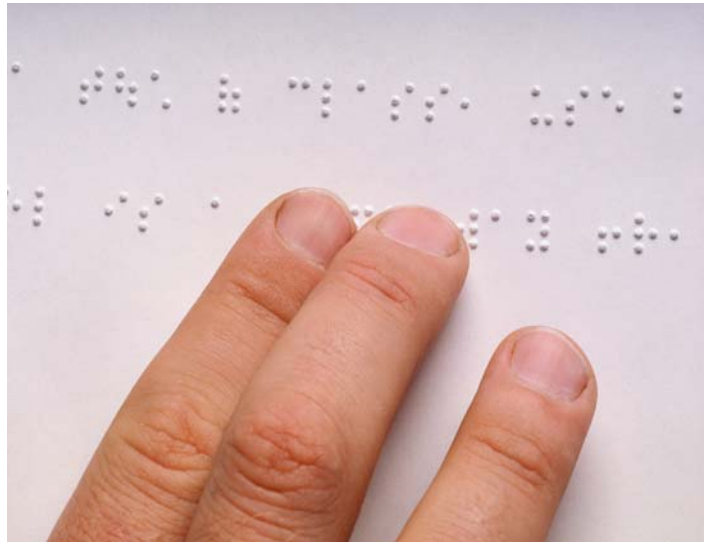
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# Give Your Child the Gift of Braille

Ever thought of going back to school? What greater gift can you give to your child who reads Braille than for *YOU* to learn Braille too!

We want to make sure that parents know that **FREE, ONLINE courses** are available through **The Hadley School for the Blind**.

Simply go to the Hadley website at [www.hadley.edu](http://www.hadley.edu), then to **ADMISSIONS**, and complete the **ENROLLMENT APPLICATION**. You could be finished with your first online Braille course in as little as four months! This introduction to Braille is taught specifically to sighted individuals who read Braille visually, rather than tactually.



*Supporting your child's education by learning Braille can be powerful!* Please take the time to visit the Hadley website for more information.



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