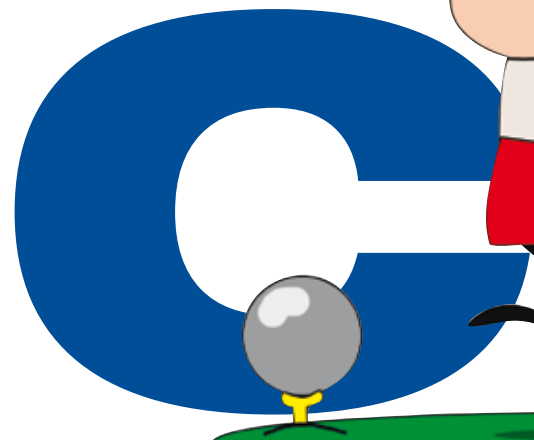


SATURDAY 25 JUNE 2011 • SCHOEMAN PARK

VOICES OF CHANGE



Transformation for PEOPLE with disabilities

**MARCH 2011
VOLUME 16**

VOC is a non-political, non-religious, non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation in partnership with the University of the Free State. We give a voice to people with disabilities by giving different academic disciplines a chance to write about their news and views.

NEWS My dog, my ears

Woman shares experience

> **p5**

NEWS We are paying for lies!

The truth behind deaf peddlers

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SHOWBIZ Work at VOC!

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FEATURES Serebraal gestremd

Sy bly 'n rolmodel

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FEATURES Guide dogs for the deaf

The history of service dogs

> **p7**

FACEBOOK: HOME OF THIEVES



Hackers are now targeting people with hearing impairment on Facebook

Magteld Smith
Cochlear Implantee
Dept of Otorhinolaryngology
UFS

ACTIVITIES and opportunities that most people take for granted can be very challenging for people with hearing impairment. While making many things more convenient for almost everyone, the internet may nowadays mean the difference between exclusion and access to those with different disabilities. This is also true for people with hearing impairment, who are increasingly using the internet to find and connect with one another. And lately, to find and connect with internet hackers.

Connecting with friends aside, the hidden dangers of Facebook are growing. There is a likelihood that everyone listed as your Facebook friends may not be real. A study conducted last year found 40 percent of all Facebook profiles are fake. Some of them have been set up by web robots or impostors.

In January, I received a Facebook friend request from a woman who called herself Sandra Owen. She claimed to be hearing impaired and

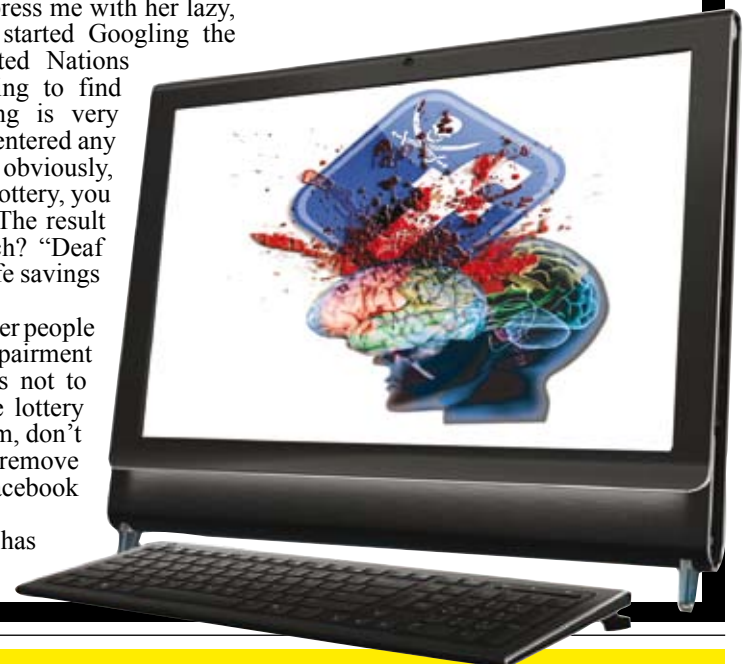
told me she had resigned from her job at Walmart after Harry Thomas from the United Nations deaf lottery gave her \$750 000. She continued to refer to my "deaf friends in Pretoria". She claimed to know all of them and said Harry would also be giving them money.

There was no doubt in my mind that the real world of hackers is targeting people with hearing impairment. While this lady tried to impress me with her lazy, ambitionless life, I started Googling the Harry Thomas United Nations deaf lottery, expecting to find proof that something is very wrong. I have never entered any lottery in my life, and obviously, if you didn't enter a lottery, you can't win anything. The result of my Google search? "Deaf man conned out of life savings in Facebook fraud"

I want to warn other people with hearing impairment and other disabilities not to be taken in by these lottery scams. Say no to them, don't contact them and remove them from your Facebook page.

As Facebook has grown in popularity,

it has also become a primary target for hackers and spammers. An increasing number of Facebook users are having their accounts compromised. Each newly compromised account is then used by the hackers and scammers to further propagate their scam. Up to date, this scam is still in full operation under different names, despite efforts of police investigators globally.



Inserted in: **Sunday Times**

SundayWorld

Sowetan

VOLKSBLAD

Express

Read us, recycle us, and log on for more of us www.ufs.ac.za/voc



Letter from the Editor:

DEAR READER

ON behalf of the VOC team, I would like to thank all our advertisers for their generous support of our project.

Without your support, we would not have been able to share VOC with the public to ultimately make them aware of this newspaper. Your sponsorships and advertisements enable us to widen up VOC as a supplement in five newspapers, namely Volksblad, Express, Sunday Times, Sunday World and Sowetan.

We would like to you to share any complaints, suggestions, achievements and professional information with us. People with disabilities are invited to contribute by sending us articles.

Your contribution is not just a charitable contribution, but is also an advertising opportunity. Without the support of people like you, we would never be able to reach our goals.

Once again, thank you for your contributions. I look forward to your continued support as we prepare for a golf day on 26 March 2011, a national academic disability award and a national art competition to change the perception of our nation on different disabilities.

We feel proud to create this awareness with the support of the University of the Free State (UFS). It is an honour to create awareness with the continued help of the UFS.

A big thank you goes out to AVUSA, Caxton, Volksblad and Paarlcoldset for ensuring that VOC features as additional material to national newspapers. With your help, support and motivation, we are creating awareness and giving a voice to people with disabilities.

Prof. André Claassen
Editor-in-Chief
Chairperson

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS!

Many thanks for your kind contributions and your continued support of VOC

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Tell us your story!

Why not share your lessons learnt and obstacles overcome with VOC readers?

THE VOC team works very hard to bring you the best stories in the fields of disabilities from all over South Africa - and who better to tell us these stories than you, the VOC reader?

VOC publishes articles about people with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, academic professionals, medical practitioners, school learners, students, managers and workers who are involved with disabilities. Promoting the contributions of people with disabilities in academics and business enhances the matching and integration of different skill sets, backgrounds, and capabilities in terms of how the development of people with disabilities is affected.

VOC newspaper will feature the following sections:

- Stories of persons with disabilities who aspire to be professionals.
- Stories and features of education practices related to persons with disabilities.
- Stories and features of corporate practices related to persons with disabilities.

We look forward to receiving submissions of your stories while providing you and your peers with progressive, insightful and educational reading. The study of disability as it relates to health services, rehabilitation, education, employment and entrepreneurship is an ongoing phenomenon and we want you to be an active part of its growth.

We are primarily interested in the following **ten fields of disabilities**:

1. Corporate Social Responsibility of companies

2. Diversity & Multiculturalism
3. Education and Literacy
4. Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
5. Funding and Innovation
6. Health and Medical Ethics
7. Information Technology
8. Non-Profit Organisations, Government programmes and projects
9. Poverty Alleviation
10. Sustainable Best Practices

If you are a worker with a story of how you overcame adversity in the workplace, we would also like to hear from you.

Send us a story telling us:

- What adversity you faced in the workplace.
- How you overcame these challenges.
- How you are an example to other prospective workers with disabilities.

If you represent an organization that advocates on behalf of individuals with disabilities we would also like to hear from you and/or your members. Together we can make this vision a collective one!

Send us a story of no more than 500 words telling us:

- Who is involved?
- How does your story begin?
- What is the essence of your story?
- How does your story end?

You may send your story via email to voicesofchangeletters@ufs.ac.za. If you would like to send the story using regular mail, we

would like you to send the documents to the following postal address:

Voices of Change
PO Box 38425
Langenhoven Park
Bloemfontein
9330

Please remember the following points.

VOC is a non-profit organisation which aims to create awareness.

WHAT VOC IS NOT?

- No references to medical practitioners, rehabilitation services, organisations etc may be made.
- No personal appointments regarding any personal issues will be featured.
- VOC does not provide any money, food, transport, employment agency, or shelter.

The decision to publish an article is solely up to the discretion of the editors and their decision is final.

The publications become the exclusive property of VOC and may not be published or reproduced by any other source without the expressed approval of the VOC editor.

VOC will not be held liable for any legal action taken in relation to the publication of articles or photos.

VOC is not responsible for inaccuracies related to the research or opinions expressed in the publications as set forth by the authors of the papers.

Onderwys in Suid-Afrika ervaar 'n gebrek aan opgeleide kundigheid

Gespesialiseerde onderwys vir kinders met gestremdhede in nood: kundigheid word dringend verlang

Peggy Swanepoel
M (Diac.) Speelterapie

EMOSIONELE-, gedrags- en sosiale probleme by kinders in Suid-Afrika word al hoe meer beklemtoon in navorsingsbevindinge. 'n Toenemende bewustheid hieromtrent beklemtoon die dringendheid van hulpverlening ten einde 'n veilige vangnet vir elke kind wat met hierdie probleem worstel te bied. Hierdie probleme word reeds deur verskeie bronne by kinders in hulle middel-kinderjare as 'n probleem geïdentifiseer.

So noem 'n verslag van die Nasionale Departement van Onderwys dat nagenoeg een uit elke tien van alle laerskoolkinders in die bestek van hul skoolloopbaan aanmeld vir hulpverlening op emosionele vlak. Met die fokus op inklusiewe onderwys gebeur dit ook dat kinders wat tradisioneel in skole met ondersteuningsstrukture gehuisves is, nou in hoofstroomskole opgeneem word en nie noodwendig die emosionele en sosiale ondersteuning ontvang waaraan hul gewoond is nie. Dit sluit kinders met leergestremdhede en leergeremdheid in, soos kinders met swak sig, kinders met gehoorprobleme en selfs kinders met spina bifida, kognitiewe agterstand of Aspergersindroom wat binne die konteks van die outismespektrum as 'n sogenaamde "hoë funksionele vorm van outisme" geklassifiseer word.

Alhoewel dit nie noodwendig waar is dat hierdie kinders emosionele probleme ondervind nie, mag die leergeremdheid eiesoortige eise aan hul leerporses stel wat in die verlede deur spesiaal opgeleide kundiges hanteer is.

Primêr word die tradisionele onderwyser toegerus om die leerder deur die proses van leer en onderrig te neem. Indien daar van 'n onderwyser verwag word om ag te slaan op emosionele-, gedrags- en sosiale probleme by kinders moet die nodige ondersteuningsnetwerke bestaan wat die onderwyser in die proses sal bystaan.

Die vraag ontstaan: Wat gebeur indien daar nie ondersteuningstelsels bestaan nie?

'n Bron van die Gautense Onderwysdepartement het bekend gemaak dat tot en met die einde van 2006 daar slegs twee gekwalifiseerde sielkundiges in 'n distrik werksaam was. Elke distrik bepaal self wie aangestel word, asook wat die minimum vereistes vir aanstellings is. Die bron is verder van mening dat kinders

in Suid-Afrika se emosionele-, gedrags- en sosiale probleme elke jaar vermenigvuldig.

Terapie behoort beskikbaar gestel word deur die onderwysdepartement en skole, veral aan kinders vir wie dit nie bekostigbaar is nie. Maar die realiteit is dat hierdie wense nie realiseer nie weens 'n tekort aan opgeleide kundigheid, asook 'n klemverskuiwing van skoolstrukture waar geen skoolstrukture bestaan nie.

Ten spyte van laer besteding aan hulpverleningsstrukture wissel sosiale-, emosionele-, en gedragsprobleme ook na gelang van die milieu waarbinne die kind grootword. Elke area het sy eiesoortige

probleme. In sommige situasies word kinders baie meer blootgestel aan die gevolge van MIV/Vigs en kon 'n kind reeds op 'n vroeë ouderdom 'n ouer of beide ouers aan die dood afgestaan het.

Ekonomiese en maatskaplike probleme soos geweld, verkragtings, wetteloosheid en fisiese verwaarloosing is ook algemeen bekend in die konteks van die tyd en plaas uiteraard druk op die emosionaliteit van die kind wat hieraan blootgestel word.

Andersoortige individuele problematiek soos dwelmmisbruik, depressie, selfmoordneigings en diefstal is ook teenwoordig binne die skoolopset

en konfronteer die onderwysstelsel met die hantering daarvan.

Die wet bepaal dat die skool die enigste instansie is waarvan bywoning vir 'n kind tot op die ouderdom van vyftien jaar verpligtend is. Dit beteken dat 'n kind daagliks vir 'n minimum van ongeveer ses ure binne die konteks van skoolstrukture tyd spandeer. Die afleiding kan hieruit gemaak word dat die skool 'n rol te speel het in die vormingsjare en noodwendig bewus sal wees van die kind se emosionaliteit, sosiale ondersteuningsstrukture en persoonlike ontwikkelingsdinamika.



"Primêr word die tradisionele onderwyser toegerus om die leerder deur die proses van leer en onderrig te neem" Hier is van die leerlinge van die Laerskool Madigetla in Trompsburg. Hierdie skool is ongeveer 120 km suid van Bloemfontein geleë.

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HET u al ouers van 'n gehoorgestremde kindjie ontmoet wat wonder of hulle kind enigsins kan HOOR wanneer daar vir hulle vertel word hoe lief sy/haar ouers hom/haar het?

By die Carel du Toit-sentrum volg ons 'n Ouditiewe Verbale Kommunikasieprogram, waar ons gehoorgestremde babas en kleuters leer om te luister en te praat.

Al die kinders in die skool dra gehoorapparate of het 'n kogleëre implanting gehad.

'n Groot persentasie van ons kinders woon hoofstroomskole by.

Ons het nog plek beskikbaar, kontak ons gerus vir enige navrae by 051-405-2712.



SOIL SCIENCE is the study of soil as a natural resource.

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Voices of Change Editorial Policy

THE articles and features published in Voices of Change undergo a rigorous editorial process. This includes extensive reviews by medical professionals and academics. This supplement, however, is not intended to provide medical care, jobs, financial aid to the public or to sponsor disability assistive devices. The information in this supplement is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses and treatment, please consult your doctor.

The articles, photos, animations, and features found in VOC are created and revised by members, physicians, writers, editors, and graphic designers of the VOC team. Our goal is to make sure that all information is accurate, balanced, current and family friendly.

The VOC editorial members review all our readers' comments on articles in this supplement and suggestions for possible improvements and corrections.

The VOC team makes every effort to be neutral and objective when focusing on different disabilities, sex, race, religion and age. Within the articles, VOC takes turns referring to human beings as "he" or "she". Remember that, even when the author of an article refers to "he" or "she", the information provided is applicable to both male and female readers, unless otherwise specified.

Although every effort is made to verify that the information provided by resources – which includes websites, organizations, books and contact particulars – is up-to-date and accurate, the information tends to change and not all of it was necessarily reviewed by Voices of Change. These resources are provided solely as a convenience to our readers and are not an endorsement by the Department of Otorhinolaryngology within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS).

R20-00 for a lie, please

After noticing some dishonest actions, VOC uncovers the truth behind beggars pretending to be hearing-impaired

YOU go to the mall with some friends, family or on your own, and somebody with a hearing impairment has left a document the size of an envelope on the table in the restaurant you are visiting. Printed on the document is the American Sign Language alphabet. The price of this document is R20-00. Someone felt sorry for the man or lady selling it and paid the R20-00. Sadly, the buyer didn't even take the document with when he or she left.

Some hearing people get very excited about this. As I am a person with a disabling hearing impairment (DHI), I also got excited about it. I went up to one of these Deaf beggars and tried to communicate with him. To my shock, he wasn't able to communicate at all: he couldn't use sign language, finger spelling or lip-reading. Not long after this, the deaf peddler disappeared like a ghost.

My feeling toward this is probably very controversial. People with DHI tend to get frustrated with people peddling with these alphabetic cards. The general feeling is that people handing out these cards are, indeed, professional beggars. The impression they give to others is that people with hearing-impaired do not work for a living and that they rely on begging to sustain themselves.

It is of interest to note where these beggars get hold of the cards. The question is: Who prints the cards? Who decides how much money to beg for? And how does the Deaf peddler get hold of these cards? I went on a quest to find the answers to these questions. My findings were very interesting indeed.

Some organizations print the cards on white glossy paper and distribute them mostly to hearing

people. They also offer the portable document format (PDF) file on their website to anyone who wants to print some alphabet cards themselves. This usually happens once a year to celebrate national deaf awareness day in South Africa. Furthermore, the cards are distributed free of charge.

The cards that Deaf peddlers sell are usually untidy and of bad quality. The name of the organization providing the beggar with the card is usually not stated. Most of the time, no identifying information is provided on the card. So who is this organization providing these cards?

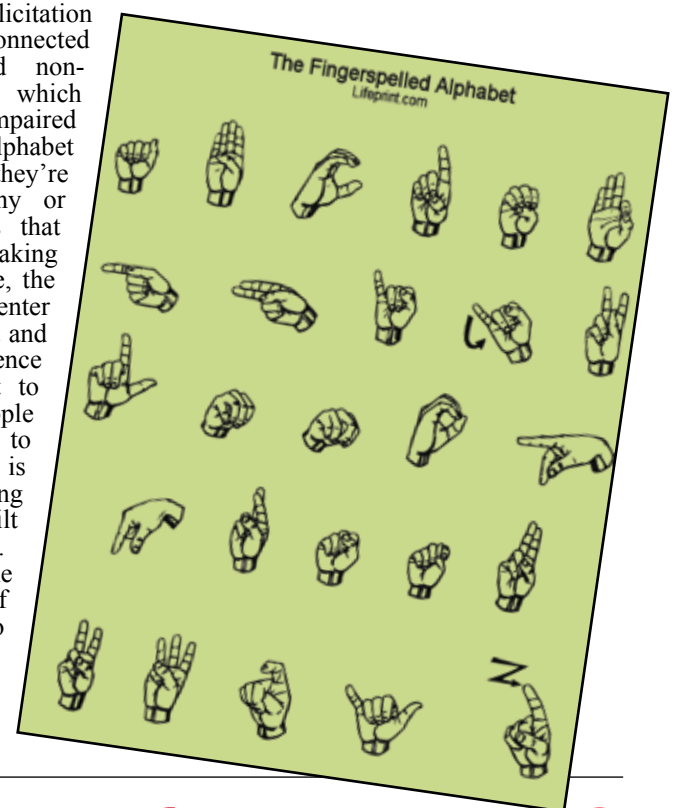
The bottom line of this story is the fact that deaf peddling is illegal in South Africa. There's a law

that prohibits solicitation by those not connected with a registered non-profit organization, which includes hearing-impaired people selling alphabetic cards. Whether they're trying to be funny or not, the reality is that these people are making money. Furthermore, the Deaf peddlers will enter a restaurant at night and cause an inconvenience and embarrassment to hardworking people who have come to enjoy a meal. This is tantamount to creating a feeling of guilt amongst the patrons.

Who are the representatives of deaf culture? Who is making it really easy for people to unknowingly break the law instead of

warning them that it is illegal. I am inclined to chalk all this up to a not-very-funny joke. It seems to me as though someone is trying to make a touchy subject a little less touchy by being flippant about it. The fact remains that it isn't funny, and the fact that they're potentially harming people seems to have escaped them.

The time has come to put begging Deaf peddlers under the microscope. People with DHI are an easy target for people to make fun of while everyone else is entitled to their inherent dignity and respect. No one's disability should be used for commercial gain – neither by a non-disabled person nor by a person with a disability.



Are your arms too short for your eyes?

A professional looks at deteriorating vision and how it can be treated



Mr. Nashua Naicker
Dept of Optometry
UFS

IF you are over the age of 40 years and find yourself struggling to clearly focus on your reading material, you are presbyopic.

Presbyopia is a gradual, age-related reduction in your near-focussing ability which is progressive in nature. If you are holding this newspaper and reading this article with your arms almost stretched out or further away from your face than you used to hold it, you might be presbyopic.

Holding your reading material at a normal reading distance will no longer provide you with that clear, comfortable vision you once had. You would then find yourself pushing your reading material further away from your face until you find your arms are too short.

An optometrist would be able to assist you in many ways by prescribing reading spectacles, bifocal or progressive spectacle lenses or alternatively, bifocal contact lenses to give you that focused comfortable vision that you once had.

Your eyes are your flashlights in the dark, so take care of your sight.



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In order to park in a disabled parking bay, an official "disabled parking disk" is required by law. However, all over SA people are abusing these disabled parking bays because they are 'available' and the unsest to the building's entrance.

Photos: Magteld Smith



Dr. Iain Butler
Dept Otorhinolaryngology
UFS

IT can be quite humiliating and frustrating for a person with a visible or invisible disability to park in a disabled parking bay. This person has a legal right to park here, but others may stare, yell and even become confrontational because they cannot see a wheelchair. Unfortunately, this kind of reaction is all too common in

South Africa. These spaces are reserved for those who have many types of disabilities, whether they are visible or not to the onlooker. They may have a ruptured disk in their back, a spinal injury, brain injury or a disease that is attacking their cells, muscles and/or nervous system. They may have neurological disorders, sensory disability and/or a mental disability experience severe pain. In other words, their disability is just as real, even though it is invisible.

My dog is a vital part of my body

Rachael de Villiers shares the major role her hearing dog plays in her everyday life

MY deafness is caused by otosclerosis. This is problem in the middle ear and can be hereditary. I never really noticed that I couldn't hear very well but I remember the nightmare the change from primary school to secondary school was.

I was told frequently how stupid I was or that I hadn't worked or listened. I went for nurse training but that went wrong for me as well. I still wasn't aware what my problem was. I just thought it was a lack of confidence.

My deafness became really marked with the birth of my daughter. It was hard. I had three children under school age and I had a disability that made me panic at night because I wouldn't be able to hear the baby.

Then it was arranged that I should have a stapedectomy, an operation that sometimes cures otosclerosis. The operation was done,

I went home and it was lovely. I could hear again!

Then, overnight, I could feel the hearing deteriorating again. I was just unlucky. The surgeon tried again a year later, but he told me that there was only a 50% chance of success. Sadly, the operation didn't help at all.

I had a hearing aid fitted and I also have a special phone with an amplifier.

The hearing aid takes in all the background noise. This means that if I am watching television, for example, I won't pick up the sound of the alarm. At night, hearing assistive devices are taken off and that's when my dog is really vital.

Once you have relied on a hearing dog, you feel empty when you have to make do without one. I just can't function without my dog. When he is not with me, it feels as though somebody has cut off my arm. I'm stressed when he's not with me.



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National Academic Awards 2011

IN 2010, VOC invited readers to submit nominations for the National Academic Awards. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the awards ceremony could not take place in 2010.

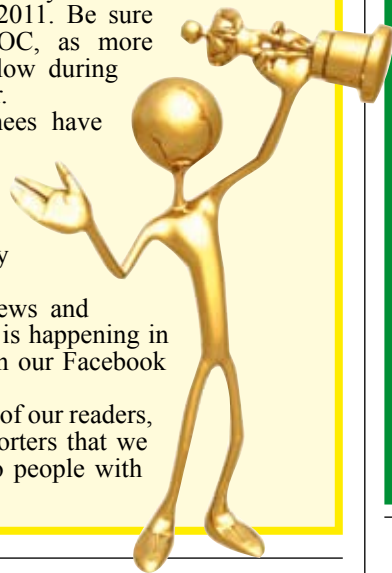
This year, however, VOC is looking forward to hosting the awards ceremony, where the hard work of people with disabilities will not go unnoticed.

The awards ceremony will take place in December 2011. Be sure to keep reading VOC, as more information will follow during the course of the year.

The 2010 nominees have been contacted and we are looking forward to seeing all of them at the awards ceremony later this year.

For up-to-date news and information on what is happening in the VOC offices, join our Facebook group.

It is with the help of our readers, advertisers and supporters that we are giving a voice to people with disabilities.



NIKS STAAN IN HAAR PAD

As 'n persoon met serebrale gestremdheid het Hercie Blaauw reeds B.A. Regte, LL.B., 'n honneurs in Afrikaans, NHOD, B.Ed. en M.Ed. grade agter haar naam

Hercie Blaauw

EK is 'n persoon met serebrale gestremdheid. Serebrale gestremdheid is 'n sindroom wat motoriese, sielkundige, epileptiese, sosiale, skoolstudies en emosionele implikasies het. Toe ek agt maande oud was, het my ma onraad vermoed omdat my broer, wat sewentien maande ouer as ek is, sy mylpale vroeg bereik het. Op agt maande het ek nog nie gesit nie. 'n Spesialis het serebrale gestremdheid by my gediagnoseer. Ek het moontlik 'n breinbesering tydens geboorte opgedoen, aangesien dit 'n baie vinnige geboorte was. 'n Ander oorsaak kon moontlik die

griep wees wat my ma tydens haar swangerskap gehad het.

Ek is rolstoel-gebruiker, maar kan op 'n gelykvlak met behulp van kieres loop. Ek het my fisieke mylpale laat bereik, maar ek het baie vroeg leer praat.

Op tweejarige ouderdom het ek Vista Nova, 'n skool vir leerders met serebrale gestremdheid, begin bywoon.

Die personeel van Vista Nova was baie toegewyd. Die persoonlike liefde en aandag wat ek ontvang het, het my as mens gevorm.

In Vista Nova het ek arbeidsterapie en fisioterapie ontvang. 'n Arbeidsterapeut leer die leerders om lewensake wat vir normale mense

vanselfsprekend is, te verrig. 'n Verdere taak van 'n arbeidsterapeut is om die leerders met serebrale gestremdheid se visueel-perseptuele probleme en dispraksia op te los. Daar word aanvaar dat sodanige gestremdhede voor die ouderdom van tien jaar reggestel of verbeter moet word.

Die een enkele faktor wat wat my kortwiek, is my visueel-perseptuele probleme. Dit het onder andere veroorsaak dat ek reeds van skoolvlak af met sommige vakke gesukkel het. Dit is dus dringend noodsaaklik dat skole en ...

VERVOLG OP BLADSY 7

Service and hearing dogs can range from a daschund to a mongrel

The wonderful world of dogs and what they can mean to a person with a disability

Magteld Smith

FOR years, I witnessed and experienced dogs assisting people with disabilities according to their individual needs. These amazing canines can be taught to open doors, fridges and cupboards, retrieve dropped articles, switch off lights and even help their owners from their wheelchairs into bed. Among many other tasks, they can also be trained to detect impending seizures and protect the person from harm during the episode. It seems there is nothing dogs cannot learn to do.

There are several different kinds of service dogs that work in collaboration with humans. We may find, for example, guide dogs, hearing

dogs, seizure alert or response dogs, medical alert response dogs for diabetes and heart disease, psychiatric service dogs and social or autism dogs.

Just as impressive as service dogs are the special canine crew that are trained to hear on behalf of people with hearing impairment. Hearing dogs, like service dogs, can also be taught a great variety of skills. They are usually trained to order, depending on the recipient's individual requirements.

These dogs are often small in stature, due to economic and practical reasons. They are usually trained to tap their owners on the leg with their paws to alert them to a sound and then lead them to the source of the sound. House alarms, alarm clocks, cell



phones, intercoms, vehicles parking outside the house, children slipping out of the house or someone knocking on the doors are just a few examples of the things dogs can hear on behalf of their owners. The dogs are also trained to react, obey visual gestures and understand different hand claps. These dogs are good communicators.



T: 051 401 2211 F: 051 401 2608
lindehm@ufs.ac.za www.ufs.ac.za/animal



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DIREKTEURE

- Willem Andries Smith Spangenberg (B Iuris LLB CFP)
- Paul Hendrik Zietsman (B Proc CFP)
- Johannes Hendrik Daniël Bloem (B Proc Dip Tax Prac)

POSBUS/ PO BOX 29418
DANHOF 9310
DOCEX 71
BLOEMFONTEIN

SEWENDESTRAAT 6 SEVENTH AVENUE
ARBORETUM
BLOEMFONTEIN
9301

TEL: 051 409 5001
FAKS/ FAX: 051 409 5050
FAKS/ FAX: 086 647 0763
SEL/ CEL: 082 8210 172
E-POS/ EMAIL: spannies@iafrica.com



VERVOLG VAN BLADSY 6

universiteite aandag aan sodanige probleme moet gee.

Dit is noodsaaklik dat 'n kind wat 'n gestremdheid het, binne haar ondersteuningsisteme onderrig moet word aangaande haar gestremdheid. Wanneer haar ondersteuningsisteme dus nie meer bestaan nie, moet die kind kan aandui hoe sy behoort ondersteun te word. Verder is dit die verantwoordelikheid van beide die persoon met 'n gestremdheid asook persone sonder gestremdhede wat in aanraking met mekaar kom, om soveel moontlik kennis oor die gestremdheid te bekom sodat die gestremdheid reg hanteer kan word.



Hercie Blaauw

NAELSTRING

Nege maande het ons gewag,
het jy gegroei,
jou ma vermoei.

Toe aanskou jy die lewenslig,
volmaak was jy,
soveel vreugde vir my.

Dog die dae word weke,
en ons word onseker,
bang groei 'n wete.

Daar's iets wat skort,
iets wat kort,
jy's anders.

Mag jy dan weet,
in my die kreet,
jy bly my kind,
ewig is ons verbind.

Hercie Blaauw

GUIDE DOGS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

We've all heard of guide dogs for the blind. But did you know there are hearing dogs for people with hearing impairment too?

Magteld Smith

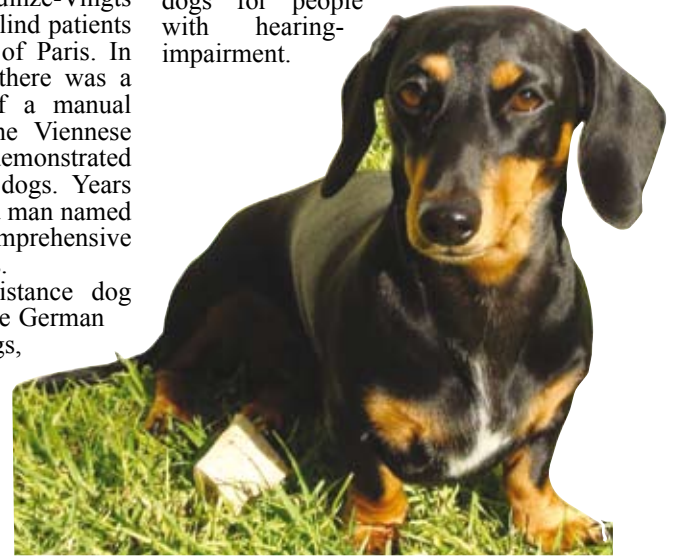
IF one is to take it literally, the history of service dogs will take an eternity to tell, as dogs have been serving and living with humans for thousands of years. What is meant by history here is tracing the beginning and development of professional dog training, wherein many assistance dog organizations and institutions emerge in various countries.

During the 18th century in France, there was a hospital named Quinze-Vingts that employed dogs to assist blind patients in walking down the streets of Paris. In the same period in Austria, there was a historical literary account of a manual written for the people in the Viennese Institute for the Blind, which demonstrated and explained how to train dogs. Years later, in 1847 in Switzerland, a man named Jakob Birner published a comprehensive training manual for guide dogs.

The first recognized assistance dog institution in the world was the German Association for Serving Dogs, which was established by the Austrian Police and the War Dog Institute in 1916. Many other dog organizations and dog training establishments followed. However, the biggest boom of demand for

service dogs started in the late 1970s and consistently grew in the 1980s, a decade in which veterinary, and especially canine, knowledge flourished.

While most dogs were only trained to assist blind people at the time, Agnes McGrath and the Minnesota Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals established a hearing dog program in 1975. This paved the way for the establishment of International Hearing Dog, Inc., which was the first institution to train dogs for people with hearing-impairment.



SNAPSHOTS by Jason Love



Kathy decides to remain standing on the scale until she loses weight.



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The gift of dyslexia

Dyslexic children use nearly five times the brain area as normal children while performing a simple language task, according to a new study by an interdisciplinary team of University of Washington (UW) researchers

OFTEN, their most crucial “life-saving” characteristic is perseverance.

Dyslexia is a syndrome of many and varied symptoms affecting millions of children and adults. Many with dyslexia and related learning and attention disorders realize quite early that they are not like their peers. Their learning and coordination difficulties often lead to ridicule and/or self-recrimination, leading them to feel dumb and depressed-isolated. As a result, one can only wonder just how many potential creative geniuses have been stigmatized and pushed aside. The study shows for the first time that there are chemical differences in the brain function of dyslexic and non-dyslexic children.

All too often, children with learning disabilities grow up to be underemployed adults, shunted into routine, dead-end occupations for life. Some have difficulties maintaining families and raising children properly. Many drift into drugs and alcohol and even crime. Their loss and cost to society is incalculable. And tragically, this staggering loss was, and is, preventable.

Since dyslexia is often a self-compensating disorder that can often be overcome with time, effort and understanding, it is crucial to provide dyslexics with success stories of well-known individuals so that they don't

give up and indeed persevere. Thus for example, there have been many dyslexics that have made tremendous contributions to mankind. These include famous entertainers, designers, architects, writers, athletes, jurists, physicians, scientists, and political and business leaders.

These successful dyslexics learned to overcome or sidestep their barriers, permitting them to accomplish their dreams and desires. In fact, at times their disorder was found to be a catalyst for success — forcing them to develop and utilize hidden talents. Often, their most crucial “life-saving” characteristic was perseverance. They never gave up, no matter how difficult the task before them seemed. Their successful lives, despite dyslexia, show us that “miracles” can be accomplished so long as dyslexics are encouraged by loving parents and caring teachers to believe in themselves.

Remember — for every famous or well-known dyslexic, there are thousands and thousands more who have made it, despite their disorder. Sadly, there are millions that have not — that could have!

www.dyslexia-teacher.com

VOC GOLF DAY INVITATION



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VOC is dedicated to transforming the lives of people with disabilities – regardless of their circumstances. VOC is an awareness newspaper inserted in the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday World*, *Sowetan*, *Volksblad* and *Express* once a month. VOC relies extensively on advertisers and donations to the Voices of Change Trust.

