

Parent to Parent

A Newsletter Specifically for Parents and Families of Students in Kentucky who are Blind and Visually Impaired

May 2005

Kentucky School for the Blind

Family Support Center, Member of Parent Resource Centers of KY



Opportunities Abound for Families to Connect at National Conference

NATIONAL FAMILY CONFERENCE

Galt House Hotel - Louisville, Kentucky

August 12-14, 2005

A parent inquiring about the conference from Kentucky said it best: "Greg and I are really looking forward to this experience; there has never been anything like this close to our home so we are excited. It should be wonderful for all of us."

The conference is close and is loaded with national experts who will be presenting on a variety of practical and informative topics. By attending, you will get the opportunity to meet other families, share with other families, and learn from other families.

Obviously there is value in parents coming together to learn and share, but the real value is our kids connecting with other kids who are blind or visually impaired and knowing they're not alone. Come and join in the excitement and fun.



FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE

The Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation (KSBCF) is making available scholarships of up to \$200 to encourage Kentucky families to attend this conference. KSBCF is offering this incentive to cover registration (\$100) and one night's lodging for those living more than fifty miles from Louisville.

To be eligible for the \$100 registration scholarship, you must complete a registration form and mail it to Burt Boyer at the American Printing

continued on page 2:

Opportunities Abound for Families to Connect, continued from page 1:

House for the Blind (PO Box 786, Louisville, KY 40206). DO NOT send the payment of \$100. A form will be submitted to KSBCF documenting you have registered.

You must also register to stay at the hotel and attend the conference to get the second \$100 scholarship.

The conference is close and is loaded with national experts who will be presenting on a variety of practical and informative topics.

Arrangements will be made with the hotel to cover one night's lodging for eligible families.

If you have questions concerning the scholarships, please contact Burt Boyer: 1-800-223-1839, ext. 264. Burt's e-mail address: bboyer@aph.org.

Make your plans now to attend this important conference. For information about the conference, go to the American Printing House for the Blind Web Site: www.aph.org. **If you would like a paper copy of the registration mailed to you or if you have questions, please call Burt Boyer at 1-800-223-1839, ext. 264.**

Early childhood consultant Patty Dilg is also looking for volunteers to help with childcare. To volunteer, please refer to the flyer attached to this newsletter, or contact Dilg at 502-897-1583, ext. 230 or pdilg@ksb.k12.ky.us.

***Parent to Parent* is a monthly publication containing information relevant to Kentucky parents and families of children who are blind and visually impaired. It is published August-May.**

Editor: Mitch Dahmke

Design & Layout: Paula Penrod

To receive an electronic copy of this newsletter, e-mail Family Support Specialist Mitch Dahmke, mdahmke@ksb.k12.ky.us or phone 502-897-1583, ext. 205

If you would like to submit an article for the August 2005 issue of *Parent to Parent*, the deadline is July 15, 2005.

See You in August

Looking Back at a Year of Recognition and Achievement

By: Family Support Specialist Mitch Dahmke

The first school year of *Parent to Parent* is ending. As much as we all have enjoyed bringing it to you this year, we need a rest! *Parent to Parent* will be back in August with more information, news and stories of interest to Kentucky blind and low vision families, including highlights from around the country.

As the school year ends, I thought it would be nice to look at the achievements and recognitions that have been garnered by some of Kentucky's students who are blind and visually impaired.

Christopher Craigmyle, a senior at KSB and Eastern High School in Jefferson County, was selected to participate in the Kentucky All-State Orchestra. Christopher plays the violin. He has been selected to this group for the second straight year. I had the opportunity to ask Christopher how he achieved such great success. He said "it was because of the support of my parents and classmates and especially the guidance of Dorothy Nolan, who through the years has seen to it that I always had the support and instruction needed to reach the point I am presently at."

Bret Dahmke, sophomore at Spencer County High School and in his first year playing on the varsity team, scored the first points ever by an offensive lineman in a football game in Spencer County's history. Bret recovered a two point conversion fumble to help lead Spencer County to a narrow victory over Louisville's Shawnee High School. His name will go down in Spencer County High School football history. Great job Bret! I think he takes after his father!

Patrick Hughes, a junior who attends Atherton High School in Louisville, was featured in the Louisville *Courier Journal* in April for his accomplishments on the piano and in the classroom. He plays piano concerts all around the nation, has been interviewed by *People* magazine, speaks fluent Spanish and maintains a 3.9 grade point average. Patrick will play a concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC this month. Also featured in the article, was **Ashley Reynolds**, who also attends Atherton.

Terry Meehan, former KSB and Trinity High School (Louisville), was featured in his Chandler, AZ high school newspaper for his talent on his cello. The article referred to Terry as "Yo Yo Meehan." Word has also been received that Terry was recently awarded two scholarships to attend Arizona State University. One of the scholarships is a performance scholarship to play his cello in the ASU orchestra. The other scholarship is a Presidential Scholarship for his academic work. Mom and dad must be so proud!

Sam Moore, junior from Henderson High School has been very busy with his Spanish class. He will be participating in statewide competition for his school in Lexington. Sam also performs with his Spanish choir. Hopefully, we will hear more about Sam in the future!

These students are a small sampling of high achieving blind and low vision students. I am sure that there are many others. So, moms, dads, grandpas and grandmas, and teachers let me know about them so we can highlight them in *Parent to Parent*. *It's a good way to brag about our kids!*

Chad Dovel: Rural Teen Worth Telling About

By: Trent Nelson, The Hamburg, Iowa Reporter (reprinted with permission)

It's not easy being a blind teenager. Chad Dovel, a Hamburg, Iowa High School freshman knows this. But, his degenerative sight has never prevented him from wearing what most who know him call his "can-do" attitude.

In fact, this 15-year-old young man is so tenacious in his desire to be involved, he was one of "COUNTRY" magazine's "Rural Teens Worth Telling About" for the months of February and March.

The son of Charlie and Debbie Dovel of rural Hamburg, Iowa, Chad has participated in high school football, hunting, chorus, and is currently a Wildcat wrestler. His mother, who wrote to the national magazine about a year ago, said she wanted people to know "about Chad and his courage in facing life as a blind teenager."

"He's an inspiration to people," she said.

"He just goes out and does his best. He's really an inspiration to us too. He has his good days and bad days – just like anybody – but he just keeps on going."

As far as the article goes, Debbie Dovel said she was glad her son was featured and given recognition for what would be a devastating obstacle for many in her son's position.

"It's pretty exciting," she said. "He has a lot to deal with in addition to just being a teenager."

In addition to calls from family friends remarking about the article, Dovel said others have called to encourage Chad to pursue his dream – to become a John Deere mechanic like his dad.

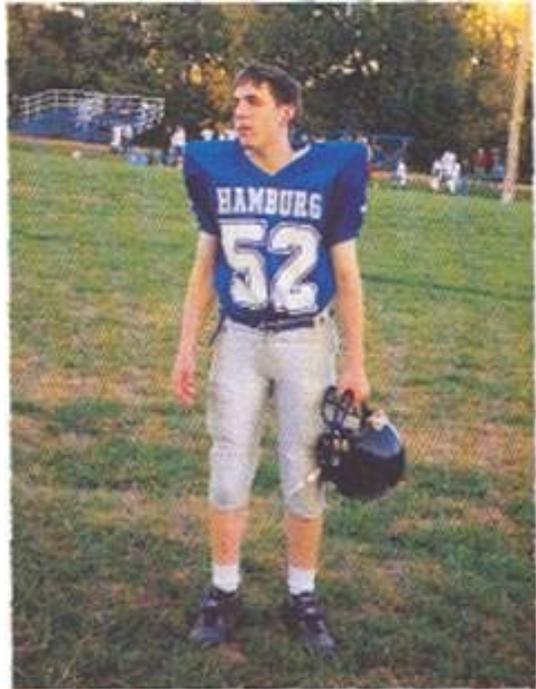
One such call was from a trucker who said when his truck broke down in Utah he entered a mechanic's shop which was dark. It turns out the mechanic was blind and had been repairing vehicles for years.

"He just wanted to tell Chad to go for it," she said about the call. "He wanted him to know it was possible."

Chad Dovel, donning his letter jacket in high school hallways, said he was impressed with all the attention.

"I kind of feel like I'm popular – that's cool," he said, adding that often he gets a good reception from the region.

For instance, at wrestling meets, when he enters to wrestle, everyone – even the opposition – cheers and wishes him luck.



Chad Dovel

Everyone deals with stress and pain in different ways. A mother from Hamburg, IA handles her pain and stress by writing. Here is a poem that was submitted this month. Many of us have had the feelings expressed in this poem at one time or another, yet we were unable to express it into words as well as Debbie Dovel.

A Mother's Plea

He only wants them to like him,
To be just "one of the guys"
But he always seems to say the wrong things,
No matter how hard he tries.
They call him a "freak" and a "dummy"
Do they think that he cant hear?
They laugh and think its funny
When he cant tell who's there.
He used to be their friend
Way back in grade school
Then something happened to him,
And now they can only be cruel.
He may be losing his vision,
But they have lost their heart.
They no longer care about him,
And it's tearing him apart.
He only wants to be normal,
Drive a car and get a job.
Simple things they take for granted,
But of which he has been robbed.
He stumbles along with a cane,
When he longs to run free.
He lives in a world of darkness
When there's so much beauty to see.
He sits at home in his room,
Playing his games all alone,
Waiting for someone to come over,
Or at least call him in the phone.
He lives a life without hope
Of ever seeing again.
He has his family for love and guidance,
But he really, really needs a friend.
He's had so many disappointments in life,
I don't think he can take another
He'd just like to go somewhere - -
With someone besides his mother.

continued on back cover:

Family Fun Fest Held in Western KY

By: Western KY Regional Consultant Nona Bazzell

The West Kentucky Educational Cooperative and KSB sponsored the April Family Fun Fest for Families of the Blind/Visually Impaired Students in West Kentucky on April 30 at the Lyon County Public Library.

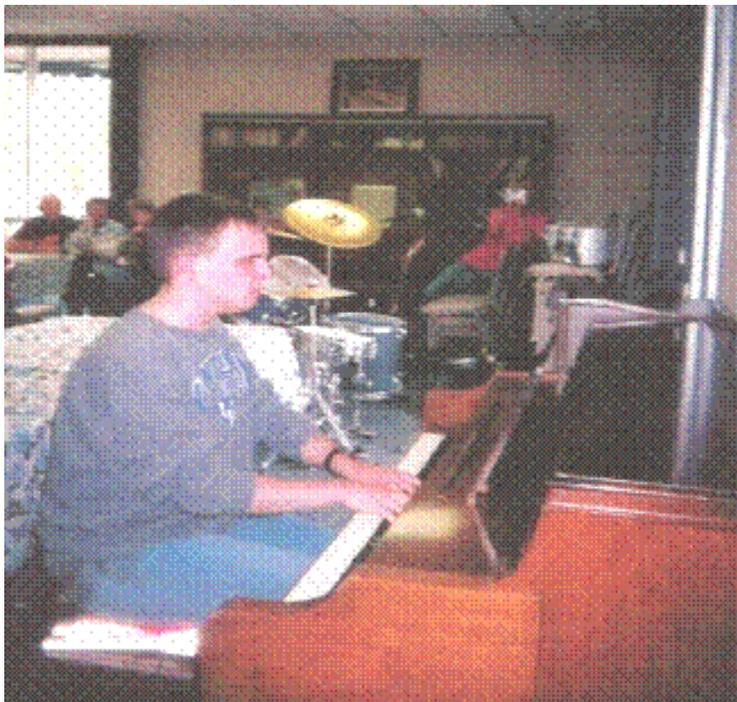
Ann Salmon of Murray presented a program on Trail Talk: Experiences of the Oregon Trail. She portrayed 14-year-old Mary Theadora as her family experienced traveling on the Oregon Trail. Salmon also showed items of that time period and explained how they were used.



Mitch Dahmke leads a round table discussion relevant to parents and families of children who are blind and visually impaired.

Sam Moore, a junior from Henderson, played the piano. Kyle and Kenton Smith, fourth graders from Ballard Elementary, entertained on the drums and guitar.

Leigh Ann Florence and animal puppets presented the book, Hugs and Kisses. She is the author of the "Woody series." The visit of the Kentucky Wiener dogs, Woody and Chloe was a special treat.



A round table discussion for parents was led by Family Support Specialist Mitch Dahmke. Concerns specific to individuals who are blind and visually impaired were discussed and resources were provided to families.

Sam Moore from Henderson provided musical entertainment on piano during the Family Fun Fest.

Mark Your Calendar

Events of Interest to Parents and Families



June 15-17 (Wed.-Fri.) Autism Institute 2005, Kentucky International Convention Center, Louisville, to receive a registration brochure, please email Kristen.frarey@louisville.edu or call 1-800-334-8635 ext.852-7277

June 20-July 22 KSB Summer Enrichment Program, Kentucky School for the Blind, for information contact Darlene Middleton, 502-897-1583, ext. 243 or dmiddlet@ksb.k12.ky.us

MS-HS: June 20-July 1

Elementary: July 11-22

Career Program: June 20-July 1 and July 11-22 Students must be 16 years-old by June 16, 2005. Graduates are not eligible to attend.

June 20-22 19th Annual Early Childhood Summer Institute, Sponsored by Kentucky Early Childhood Regional Training Centers, Executive West Hotel, Louisville. Contact Vanessa Garland, Berea Early Childhood Regional Training Center, 800-343-2959 or vgarland@berea.k12.ky.us

June 28-29 CANCELLED 1st Annual Low Incidence Institute,

July 2-8 National Federation of the Blind Convention, Galt House, Louisville, for registration information contact NFB or Kenny Jones, 502-897-1583, ext. 235 or KJONES@ksb.k12.ky.us

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (part of NFB Convention listed above), for preregistration packet contact Barbara Cheadle at NFB, 410- 659-9314, ext. 2361 or bcheadle@nfb.org; or Kenny Jones 502-897-1583, ext. 235 or KJONES@ksb.k12.ky.us

July 3-9 Kentucky Lions Youth Camp (for children ages 8-15 who are blind and visually impaired and/or deaf or hard of hearing), Camp Crescendo in Bullitt County for more information contact Camp Director Cecil Warner, 502-223-8514 or cwarner@min.net

July 28 Learning Disabilities Association of Kentucky Presents: "Linking legislation, Lessons, and Learning: A Plan for the Classroom and the Family Room, Rick Lavoie, M.A., M. ED. 8:45 AM-4:15 PM, Kentucky International Convention Center, Louisville. Contact LDA of Kentucky 1-877-587-1257 or ldaofky@yahoo.com

August 12-14 "Families Connecting with Families," National Family Conference, Galt House, Louisville, for information go to www.aph.org/advisory/nfc.html.

A Mother's Plea, continued from page 5:

Please have some compassion
For others less fortunate than you,
Reach out your hand in kindness
And help pull him thru.
Remember it's only by Gods grace
That blindness didn't happen to you.
Think about what it must be like,
Put yourself in his shoes.
Take time and really listen,
Stop calling him names,
Start thinking of someone else,
For a change.
The benefits are far greater
Than you can realize.
God will bless those who take the time
To make a difference in someone's life.

*Debbie Dovel
January, 2005*



Serving Students Since 1842

**Kentucky School for the Blind
1867 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, KY 40206
Phone: 502-897-1583
Fax: 502-897-2994
Website: www.ksb.k12.ky.us**
