

**Southern Arizona Association for the Visually Impaired  
Fall Newsletter  
2008**

Welcome to the new edition of the SAAVI newsletter! 2008 has been both a busy and rewarding year for SAAVI. We have grown in many exciting and productive ways. One of the major areas of growth has been services to our visually impaired and blind students transitioning out of high school. These services include our annual Ready Set Go Summer Camp which has yielded several new students living in our Steppin Out program - providing residential training and support services for students in their first year of college or work following high school. We have also increased our Health and Wellness Program thanks to a grant from Pima County Outside Agency to purchase adaptive equipment for visually impaired/blind users. By adding in additional equipment and new movement studio we are able to offer clients a variety of routines to encourage healthy lifestyles. Our staff and clients are also involved in various adaptive sports outside of SAAVI - including beep baseball which is a version of baseball adapted for visually impaired/blind people by using a beeping ball and bases. SAAVI initiated this program through a series of three clinics providing exposure to children and adults with visual impairment. From these activities a local team, sponsored by SAAVI, was formed and represented Southern Arizona with the ultimate goal of participating in various Regional Tournaments and ultimately the 2009 National Championship which will be played in Stockton, California. Additionally, we are taking part in the Tucson Marathon by using sighted guide runners to assist visually impaired/blind runners. We are exploring opportunities to expand by providing services to the Green Valley and Southern Tier area. We all thank you for your continued support and look forward to a new year full of new opportunities!

- Mike Gordon, Executive Director

**2008 FESTIVAL OF TREES**

It's that time of year again....yes, it's time to fight with the massive ball of tangled up Christmas lights to decorate the tree. Well, how would you like to save all the hassle of untangling those lights and be able to contribute to SAAVI at the same time?

From November 22nd to December 20th at the Foothills Mall in Tucson we are holding a Festival of Trees. There are various trees decorated to win with the \$5 purchase of a raffle ticket! All proceeds go to SAAVI to purchase supplies and services to help those with visual impairments! For more information or to volunteer to sit at our ticket table in the mall please contact Sherry Mota at 795-1331.

### **COOKING CLASSES - FALL 2008**

It's coming up to the Fall season and that means it's time to dust off those baking pans and that oven and get cooking! Saavi is offering a range of new classes to help with using the stove, oven and even cooking without the stove. Client Coordinator, Rhonda Culp is busy scheduling new classes to begin shortly all to teach people kitchen safety, new recipes and new techniques for cooking at home.

The classes will be Cooking Without The Stove; Baking and Oven Cooking and Stove Top Cooking which will have both beginners and advanced levels. Patty and Anna who will be teaching the classes are both visually impaired and realize the difficulties encountered with cooking for VI people. One of the treats about the classes is that you get to eat what you make!

### **GOALS AND STARS**

We have just started up our new GOALS session and it is going well!! For those of you who are unfamiliar with GOALS and STARS we run two classes to introduce assistance to visually impaired people. GOALS, which stands for General Orientation Adaptive Living Skills, is our introductory class which runs for four weeks. In this class you will learn about adaptive techniques which will enable you to continue to live independently. Some activities that are incorporated include daily tasks such as basic kitchen skills, cleaning and learning about community resources and support for people with visual impairment.

STARS, Special Training Advanced Rehabilitation Service, is a class that continues on from GOALS and runs for 3 months. During STARS individuals will have the opportunity to gain hands on experience in using the skills they learned about in GOALS plus new adaptive techniques.

If you are interested in GOALS or STARS please contact Lisa Pozner at 795-1331 extension 229.

### **SAAVI EYE BALL**

SAAVI held their annual Eyeball November 1st at Skyline Country Club and it was fantastic! The night started off with a silent auction, followed by a delicious three course meal! Dinner was accompanied by a live auction which included fabulous items such as signed Arizona Wildcats memorabilia and a round trip for 4 in a private plane to San Diego! After dinner the dance floor was cleared and the guests got up and shook their groove thing all night! There was even a dance competition which SAAVI's very own Orientation and Mobility Instructor Melanie Kondziolka was one half of the winning team! The SAAVI Dancers were definitely the highlight of the night when staff members from SAAVI got on the dance floor and danced to three classic 70's tunes!

Dr. Reid Schindler was honored for his life-long contribution to the field of blindness and visual impairment.

### **SAAVI ALUMNI**

Saavi Alumni meets every Thursday from 9:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.. Activities include guest speakers, field trips and potlucks. Saavi Alumni members share friendship and support. Come join us.

For more information please phone Milly on 325-5275

### **SHOP AND GIVE AT BASHAS**

Did you know that Bashas' Grocery Store contributes up to \$5,000 to Saavi??

We've been invited to participate again this year in their "Shop and Give" program. After you sign up for this program Bashas donates a percentage of your total purchase to Saavi!

To take part in "Shop and Give" all you have to do is contact the Customer Services desk and ask them to relink your Bashas card to Saavi's Group Number 24304.

You can learn more about his at Basha's website:  
[www.bashas.com/charity.php](http://www.bashas.com/charity.php)

## **SAAVI's CRAFT CORNER**

### **SAAVI SEWERS**

Every Thursday morning you can hear the buzz of the sewing machines at Saavi. The Saavi Sewer's club has been meeting there for six years and providing Saavi with a colorful variety of hand made products in the lobby for sale. From braided rugs to microwave pot holders the club create numerous items from donated fabric and sheets.

They are not only creating wonderful items in their club but also have made great friendships at the same time. All are welcome to join the Saavi sewer's!!

They are always looking for donations such as cotton sheets, fabrics and women's tights for weaving into rugs! Donations can be made at Saavi.

### **COPPER TOOLING**

Every Wednesday morning in the ILS Kitchen at Saavi, the copper tooling club meets. If you aren't familiar with copper tooling it involves using thin sheets of copper which are then placed onto raised designs and pressed into place using various tools or brushes. The finished product is a beautiful copper wall plate. This class is a great place to show off your artistic style and to have great fun at the same time! For more information please contact either Donna Long or Patty Greene on 795-1331.

### **ART CLASS**

The Saavi Art Class meets every Monday and Wednesday from 9:30—12:00 in the Saavi ILS Kitchen. You don't have to be a Picasso or a Monet to come along...just bring your imagination and join us for a few hours of fun!

For more information contact Saavi on 795-1331

## **ARIZONA TAX CREDIT**

Thanks to legislation enacted by the State of Arizona, persons, like you, who are committed to helping the visually impaired can provide a \$400 contribution (single taxpayers: \$200) to advance SAAVI's mission. The special \$400 contribution can be both a tax credit and a tax deduction. If you make this contribution, you may receive a dollar-for-dollar credit on your Arizona State Income Tax liability. Further, you could also list this contribution on your Federal tax return as a charitable deduction. You can make this contribution in the following ways:

- ◆ Send a check for any amount, up to \$400 to SAAVI
- ◆ Call SAAVI and charge the contribution to your credit card

Transactions need to be made by December 31, 2008. Thank you

## **OPERATION SAAVI AT DAVIS MONTHAN AFB**

Nearly 2,000 phone calls come through Davis Monthan daily and for almost a decade SAAVI telephone operators have provided a welcoming service for not only local area callers but calls from serving soldiers from abroad. The incoming calls from deployed soldiers and civilian personnel allow people to stay in contact with family members in the Tucson area.

Marine Sergeant Major Roxanne Harper knows firsthand how important contact with family is for deployed soldiers and in appreciation of the switchboard operators, Sgt Major Harper presented the staff with a base flag that was flown over the Marine 164th Corps Support Group Headquarters at Balad Air Base. SGM Harper credited the operators for providing a lifeline for all military stationed in Iraq. During the presentation she told the operators how they had become a connection for many military personnel who may be reaching out for information or a link to home.

They have had much praise about their services and it doesn't go unappreciated by any means. One soldier told a switchboard operator by keeping him in touch with his family while serving in Afghanistan "you made my life bearable". Those life links are accessible because of SAAVI's Davis Monthan switchboard operators.

## **STUDENT LOUNGE**

This summer Saavi held their first annual Ready Set Go Summer Transition Camp for young adults aged 15-21. From June 22nd to July

25th Rhonda Culp and Amy Murillo-Hicks hosted the camp for 12 campers! The camp encompassed many aspects of learning to live independently. The campers lived in their own apartments and shopped and cooked for themselves. Some campers held down jobs while some attended Pima Community College classes. Every camper took part in assistive technology classes to learn more about computers. There were many social activities and all took part in traditional camp games (including a water balloon fight here and there!) Along with learning how to cope with the daily challenges life throws at us all, the campers also were challenged by using local transportation in Tucson to get to and from appointments or workplaces.

Through the camp there was much independence gained and a lot of laughs to be had. There will be a camp coming up next year and we hope to have as much fun as this camp provided while teaching young people with visual impairments to live independent lives.

### **HEALTH AND WELLNESS ROOM**

We have revamped our Health and Wellness room this September to commemorate Lisa Banta bringing home the gold medal from Beijing. The room is designed for individuals of all ages with vision impairment to explore their wellness options. We have expanded our existing wellness room into two areas - one with a focus on physical wellness and the other to focus on movement and spatial awareness. We specifically offer classes in chair exercises, movement for seniors, weight training and cardio. For more information please phone Lisa on ext 230

### **GO TEAM USA**

WELL DONE to Lisa Banta and the 2008 Women's Goal Ball Paralympic Team for bringing home the Gold Medal in Beijing!

### **SEARS AND SAAVI PUT PEOPLE TO WORK**

SAAVI's Assistive Technology Department has been overly quiet these past six weeks without it's Head Honcho Manny Aregullin. Manny, Jamie Trausch and Daniel Greene have all been working on a contracted

worksite modification to accommodate six visually impaired and blind people to work as call center agents for Sears. These employees must use 14 different software programs to work in the call center - all of which Manny, Jamie and Daniel helped to rewrite for visually impaired individuals using adapted computer aids. The project was started in Tucson, the modifications were completed in Tucson and will be utilized for call centers across the country! This will allow visually impaired people nationally to have access to call center employment by providing software that is accessible.

Training for the newly appointed Sears employees will begin December 8, 2008! Good luck to them all from SAAVI!

## **MEET THE STAFF**

### **SCOTT HURLBURT**

Saavi's own Jack of All Trades, Scott Hurlburt is a man with many talents! Along with supervising the switchboard operations at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Scott also is a qualified Massage Therapist specializing in sports related injuries. Scott spends his free time enjoying extensive bicycle rides with the Jim Click cyclist's group. Scott is also a nationally ranked Olympic power lifter!

Visually impaired himself, Scott is a great example of how hard work and determination are key in life. You can contact Scott about his Massage Therapy through Saavi on 795-1331.

## **MEET THE CLIENT**

### **ALICIA REYES**

This year at the voting polls there was a new smiling face ready to place her vote for the very first time! Originally from Mexico, Alicia Reyes has strived to learn English through a variety of English as a second language classes but as visually impaired people can attest these methods aren't always useful, as often visual learning tools are incorporated into these classes. Alicia has worked for seven months with teacher Lenny Murillo not only to study her English but to take and pass the written American Citizenship test. In September 2008 she passed the test with 100%! She currently is a vocational rehabilitation client at SAAVI and is using her classes to not only practice her English but to make new friends, build confidence and increase her contacts for her

vocational training.

**DECEMBER 13th**

**Parade of Lights**

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This year SAAVI had a float in the Tucson Parade of Lights! Our theme was 'Set Your Sights on Christmas' and we had a lot of fun planning the decorations - such as using battery packed lights to string along people's canes!

**DECEMBER 14**

**WINTERHAVEN FUN RUN**

What a busy weekend this was for SAAVI!! On the 14th we participated in the Winterhaven FunRun! Members of SAAVI staff and clients got together to help the local Food Banks by donating cans of food for their entry fee.

**From all of the staff at SAAVI we wish you a holiday season filled with joy and peace.**

**We will be closed December 25, 26th and January 1st and 2nd.**

