



VOICE

The Disability Community Resource Center Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2019



DCRC Newsletter Edited by Jay Aquino and TJ Hill

A BLUEPRINT FOR LEARNING

Every building starts with a blueprint. It needs a plan on how it will be built, and what steps to take to achieve that objective. Our minds work in a similar way when it comes to learning. Sometimes we need to have a blueprint in order to achieve our goals.

This was the case for DCRC member Lawrence Lancaster. Lawrence wanted to grow in his role as an advocate for people with disabilities. However, he says that sometimes it is difficult to navigate the opportunities that are out there. Keith, DCRC's Assistive Technology Services Coordinator, told him about Cal State Northridge's Assistive Technology Certificate Program. Keith is a graduate of the program. "I completed the program online at home, at my own pace. I had the experience of going through it, so I knew what to expect" explains Keith. The Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program gives its students the means to understanding the different types of assistive technology, and how they can meet the needs of people with disabilities in other settings. Students learn how different

applications of assistive technology can be used at a workplace, school, home, etc. One of the components of the program is learning about the various new assistive technologies that are emerging within the field, including, but not limited to: computer access, ergonomics, mobility devices, and alternative communication. Overall, the program gives students a specific expertise in assistive technology.

Due to his visual impairment Lawrence needed assistance to fully grasp the material. "When DCRC came in, they really assisted me in advocating for my vision. Basically, DCRC helped me with a blueprint." So in addition to helping him apply for the program, Lawrence and Keith put together a blueprint so that he would have the accommodations from the Department of Rehabilitation to achieve his best potential in the program. Lawrence felt that having tools like an iPad, which have screen reading features, would be helpful in his studies. This blueprint planning approach allowed Lawrence to have access to tools like this while completing the program.



AT Services Coordinator Keith Williams meeting with DCRC Member Lawrence Lancaster

Lawrence says even with his accommodations program was challenging, so he has decided to take a step back from it. It is something that Lawrence plans to reengage with in the future while he takes the time to prepare. He still recommends the Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program at Cal State Northridge to anyone looking to learn more about assistive technology. Undeterred, he knows what he needs to work on before continuing with it again, and says Keith is working with him. "It's easy to get knocked down. We tend to be hard on ourselves, and we compare ourselves to the exceptional, most times, and not recognizing how exceptional we are ourselves. That's what basically keeps me coming back to DCRC and being so engaged. I do see the efforts in trying to engage the

community, and seeing the full potential that each individual has."

We are happy to continue to assisting you to achieve your goals Lawrence!
For more information about our Assistive Technology services at DCRC, feel free to contact Keith at (310)390-3611 ext.214, or by email via keith@dcrc.co.

For more information about Cal State Northridge's Assistive Technology Certificate Program, you can visit the program's website at: <https://www.csun.edu/cod/assistive-technology-certificate-program>.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February is and will always be the month of LOVE for me. Valentine's Day is a nice reminder mid-month to take stock of those relationships that raise us up. They don't have to be romantic relationships, although it's important to take extra care in honoring those if you are lucky enough to have one. I like to extend my celebration of LOVE to everything around me that makes my heart full. That acknowledgment extends to the incredible work of the Disability Community Resource Center staff, Board and volunteers who bring so much LOVE to the work of the Center and the members we serve.

In 1967 John Lennon famously penned "All You Need Is LOVE" as the Beatles' anthem for the Peace Movement. That song and its message have endured generations to help us all remember its simple truth. Please take the time this month to look for and celebrate all the LOVE that is around you. Look to the stories in this issue of VOICE filled with commitment, passion and indeed LOVE. The DCRC has been connecting people with disabilities to resources, training and advocacy tools for 43 years. Recognizing an individual's potential and encouraging personal growth so that person can achieve their best



DCRC Executive Director TJ Hill

self – that is LOVE!

February is also a perfect time to set your own goals for how you express your LOVE throughout the year. As a community non-profit, we depend on the financial support of individuals, foundations and corporate partners to grow our programs and continue vital services that promote independence and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. Demonstrate your LOVE for the disability community by making a donation to the Center. Every dollar goes toward making someone's dreams possible. I can't think of a better way to show your LOVE.

To make a donation, go to <https://www.dcrc.co/donate/>

THE ABILITIES EXPO: 40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

The Abilities Expo has been a resource for people with disabilities and the Los Angeles community for 40 years. In 1979, disability rights activist Richard C. Wooten and his wife Pat invested their life savings to create a trade fair specifically to show goods and services for people with disabilities. First called the Abilities Unlimited Expo and later renamed the Abilities Expo, it was his Wooten's personal experiences that led him to recognize the need for this event. At 15 years old, Wooten became paralyzed by polio. As a result, he and his father had to create an innovative portable hand control device that allowed him to drive a car. This experience led him to creating assistive technology and advocating for the disability community. Wooten passed away in 1995, but his legacy lives on in through his contributions as an advocate and his creation of the Abilities Expo.

Over the years, the Abilities Expo has evolved to fit the needs of the disability community. It's become a place where people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, health care professionals, and therapists can all meet and talk about the issues facing the community. Vendor booths

and workshops showcase the newest mobility products, devices to assist people with developmental disabilities, therapeutic cannabis, emerging therapy techniques, and much, much more.

"It's a good networking experience" says Keith Williams, DCRC's Assistive Technology Services Coordinator. Keith feels that going to the conference allows him to keep up to date with latest in assistive technology. "There is a great collection of vendors that serve the disability community. Everyone and every organization under the sun are there. It's breathtaking." Keith mentioned being impressed with a fully accessible kitchen he saw last year at a booth. Through a combination of Wi-Fi, reachers, grabbers, and other AT tools, the kitchen was customized to accommodate a person with a physical disability. It really displayed what assistive technology makes possible in achieving personal independence

Rosy Tellez, DCRC's PSEP Coordinator, has gone every year since she started working at the center. She enjoys finding out about the latest in adaptive clothing, sports, and video games. "The workshops are great



DCRC'S Booth at the Abilities Expo in 2017.

and really informative, covering various disabilities and experiences,” explains Rosy. This also allows her to better recommend tools and pathways to independence to DCRC’s members. Last year at the Expo, she was introduced to grounding therapy, a type of therapy designed to ground a person, especially as a means to cope with dissociation and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “I had never heard of it before, but now I’m recommending it to friends” says Rosy.

Although the event started in Los Angeles, there are Abilities Expos all across North America throughout the year. The Abilities Expo will also be in Toronto, New York, Chicago, Houston, Boston, San Mateo, and Dallas later this year. To think, it all started with desire to find the right equipment. When asked about the importance of

finding the right equipment, Wooten said “Sometimes, the equipment can just open up a whole new world. You can totally turn someone’s life around in just a few days.” What new devices and topics will be there this year? You will have to come to the Abilities Expo to find out!

You can find the DCRC at Booth 116 every day of the Abilities Expo.

For more information on the Abilities Expo, please check out the Abilities Expo website: <https://www.abilities.com/>. The Abilities Expo in Los Angeles is February 22-24, at the LA Convention Center, West Hall A. You can register for the event here: <https://www.abilities.com/losangeles/vregister.html>.

App of the Month: Be My Eyes

Be My Eyes is a free app that connects people with blindness and low-vision with sighted volunteers and company representatives for visual assistance through a live video call.

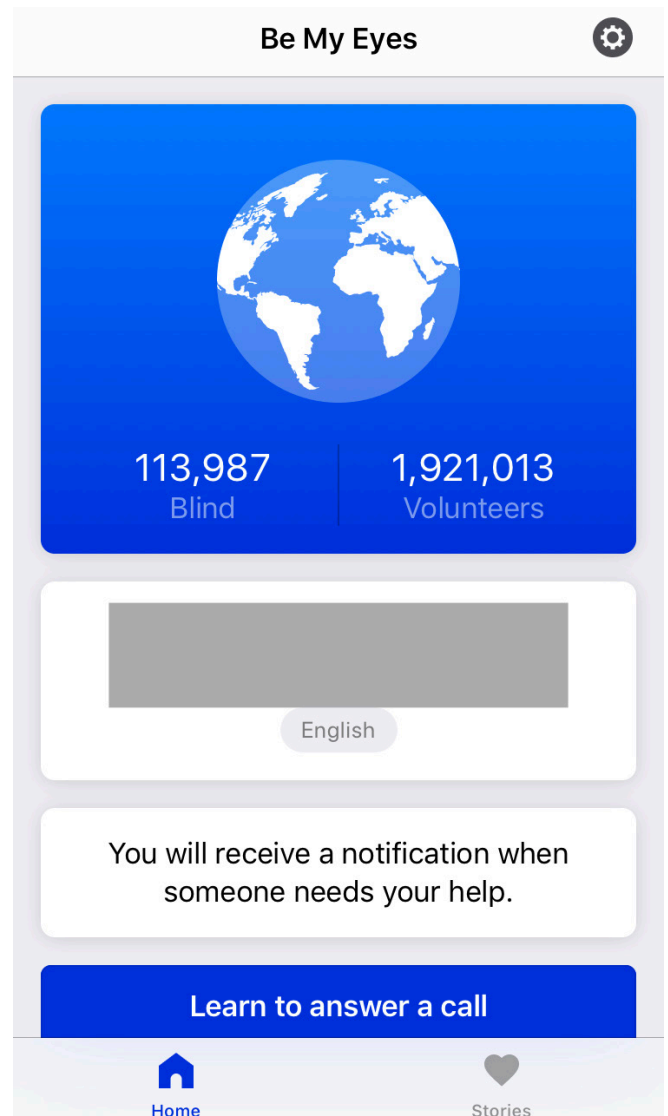
As of January 30, 2019 there are 1.9 million sighted volunteers on call for more than 113,000 blind or low-vision people.

“I love using Be My Eyes as a sighted volunteer because I always have a great experience helping out the blind/low-vision users. I recently helped a man who recently had eye surgery. He wanted to know how red his eyes were to be able to judge how his healing was progressing and if he needed more eye drops. I was able to help him by letting him know the state of his eyes and by finding the right eye drops to use. He was so grateful and I’m glad that we both got a smile from each other even from our quick connection.”

- Colleen Dragovich, DCRC Job Developer

For more info, you can visit the Be My Eyes website at: <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>

This app is available in the [Apple iTunes](#) and the [Google Play store](#) for Androids.



Screenshot of the Be My Eyes App.

Upcoming Events

DCRC Make a Friend Day

When: Friday February 15th

Time: 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Where: DCRC Community Room

Make a Friend at DCRC's Make A Friend Day in the Community Room, starting at 11:30 am. There will be games, fun activities, and light refreshments. Dress to impress!

DCRC at the Abilities Expo

When: February 22-24

Time: Friday (Feb. 22) 11am-5pm

Saturday (Feb. 23) 11am-5pm

Sunday (Feb. 24) 11am-4pm

Where: Booth 116, LA Convention Center,
West Hall A

1201 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90015

DCRC is an Organizational Sponsor for the Abilities Expo in 2019. Feel free to come by our booth and visit us!

Abilities Expo brings you thousands of game-changing products, services and technologies all under one roof. Regardless of the type and level of your disability, the Abilities Expo strives to provide the resources you need to exceed your own expectations and thrive.

For more information, please check out the Abilities Expo website: <https://www.abilities.com/>. You can register for the event here: <https://www.abilities.com/losangeles/vregister.html>



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