



# Bridging the Gap

The newsletter of

Regional and Statewide Services for Students with Orthopedic Impairments

We always look forward to hearing the reports from Regional Program representatives at meetings of the statewide OI

Working Group. At our recent fall meeting, it was exciting to hear of the synergy that can happen when people unite as a team to contend with changing needs and changing budgets. In some cases, this means responding to changes in service needs on the part of local districts. In one example, therapists with the Southern Oregon Regional Program are working a flexible schedule to accommodate the needs of a school that burned down and now shares the high school building in split shifts. The Central Oregon Regional Program has instituted a mobile equipment repair van to provide services on-site at far-flung schools. Another rural program is using videotaped reporting to facilitate collaborative teaming across a geographically widespread region. In one case, a videotape was useful in alerting a child's doctor about a suspected medical condition. Many EI/ECSE programs across the state are putting a new emphasis on parent coaching. In many programs, staff are

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VIEW from the BRIDGE  
— Diana Roberts

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being challenged to develop educational modules and materials aimed at adults in addition to children. Some programs are coping with change by prioritizing staff

morale-building. Others are supporting their staffs with additional training. For some, it means just encouraging each other one day at a time to keep on keeping on.

One key to maintaining our bearings in a changing landscape is to keep our eyes on what we know to be our role and our mission. At the working group meeting we took time to review RSOI's mission and to plan future activities. RSOI is about capacity-building; providing you with the resources that you need to do the best job you can for children, schools and families. We do this by offering trainings, conferences, technical assistance, the loan library, the newsletter and our website. The OI working group has a dual purpose as the advisory group for RSOI. They agreed that RSOI has an important role statewide in sharing information and in helping to develop consistency in services to children across regions. They affirmed that the need for this kind of networking throughout the state is especially critical

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## In This Issue

- Registration materials for the annual *Seminar for Feeding Teams* are enclosed with this newsletter. This year's conference is a unique opportunity to hear two nationally-known specialists in early childhood feeding disorders. Registration materials may also be downloaded from our website at RSOI.org. We hope you'll join us!
- Call for Presenters for TIES 2003, the 17th Annual TIES conference, April 7 & 8. Now is the time to consider whether you'd like to present at TIES this year. One presenter for each session gets free registration for the conference.

Regional and Statewide Services for Students with Orthopedic Impairments • RSOI  
1871 NE Stephens • Roseburg, OR 97470 • 541-440-4791 • Fax: 541-957-4808 • www.rsoi.org

Gayl Bowser • Coordinator • [gayl.bowser@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:gayl.bowser@douglasesd.k12.or.us) • Diana Roberts • Consulting Teacher • [diana.roberts@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:diana.roberts@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

December, 2002

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as resources become more scarce. In discussing service needs, the group made many suggestions for training, technical assistance, materials development and special projects. One idea is presented in this copy of *Bridging the Gap*. It's a regular column to showcase the strategies developed by therapists in educational practice around the state. The column, titled "Strategies Exchange," debuts on page 3 of this newsletter. We hope that you'll be encouraged by reading about the solutions of your colleagues, and that you'll send us your ideas to share!

**H**ow can we best insure that quality services to children and students with special needs are maintained? By keeping our attention on what we can do to promote best practice, and on the children, schools and families that we serve.

## International Exchange Opportunities

*Mobility International USA is a unique organization offering international exchange opportunities for people with disabilities. And, it's based right here in Oregon! MIUSA empowers people with disabilities to become not only advocates for themselves, but community leaders. The Eugene-based organization coordinates international exchange experiences for teens and young adults who have disabilities and for professionals in disability-related fields. They also host groups from abroad who visit the US to experience the rights and responsibilities of citizens with disabilities here. Workshops offer confidence-building and leadership training experiences. Let your students and colleagues know of the life-changing opportunities available through Mobility International. See the MIUSA website at [misua.org](http://misua.org) for information about these and hundreds of other opportunities available in international exchange, provided at no cost to individuals with disabilities. Phone/TTY is (541) 343-1284.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Diana Roberts

### “Are education-based Occupational Therapists doing vision therapy in Oregon?”

Vision therapy is also known as Vision training. (Not to be confused with what vision specialists do with students who have vision impairments.) In a policy statement on Learning, Dyslexia and Vision, published by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, in March, 1992, vision training is defined as treatment that includes "muscle exercises, ocular pursuit, neurological organizational training, or tinted or colored lenses". The policy statement concludes that there is no known eye or visual cause for dyslexia or learning disabilities, and no effective visual treatment for those disorders. In 1997, a group of Lane County physicians sent out a letter to local schools, stating that vision therapy is not appropriate for the evaluation or treatment of learning disabilities or dyslexia. OI working group members

generally agree that therapists in educational practice do not provide vision therapy because it is considered to be a medical treatment, rather than an educational one. There is a difference between vision *therapy* and vision *strategies*, which are related to a child's goals and objectives.



Accommodations such as preferential seating, use of typing stands for copy work, highlighting of key text, or enlargement of worksheets, are all appropriate educationally-related vision strategies. If a family requests vision therapy for a child, schools most often refer them to a developmental optometrist. For a copy of the physicians' letter and the

AAO policy statement, contact Diana at the RSOI office. Questions for "FAQ" may be sent to Diana at RSOI.

## NEW IN THE RSOI LIBRARY

The RSOI Library can be viewed online on the RSOI website, [www.rsoi.org](http://www.rsoi.org). Search the database to select items. Download and print the Library Loan Agreement form from the main page of the website. Fill it out and fax or mail it to the RSOI office to request loan items.



### ***Nutrition Interventions for Children with Special Care Needs***

This comprehensive, easily-understandable resource, is published by the Washington State Department of Health. It includes sections on how to determine a child's nutrition status, and suggested nutrition interventions for specific problems and conditions. Topics include behavioral issues, tube feeding, medication-nutrient interactions, failure to thrive, prematurity, oral-motor and metabolic disorders. The book includes a chapter on ketogenic diets for seizure disorders. The Appendix contains growth charts for a variety of conditions including CP, plus nutrition-related IEP goals and objectives and many other resources. (May, 2002) **Item # 468**

### **Videos:**

#### ***Collaborative Planning: Transforming Theory into Practice, Tape 1***

Richard Villa provides specific, practical strategies to assist school teams to plan collaboratively for differentiated classroom instruction and sharing of responsibilities. A useful guide for transforming theory into practice. 2002, 32 minutes. **Item # 468**

#### ***Collaborative Teaching: The Co-Teaching Model, Tape 2***

Building upon five essential components of collaborative planning, Richard Villa provides general and special educators with specific strategies that help to ensure successful co-teaching in inclusive classrooms. Provides clear, concise, research-based information. 2002, 35 minutes. **Item # 470**

## The Strategies Exchange



Allen Tenney, an OT with the Central Oregon Regional Program, in Bend, has taken his show on the road. Allen has a van which he has equipped with tools and spare parts for wheelchairs, walkers, etc. He travels to schools throughout the region adapting and repairing equipment. Services are by request from a therapist. Allen has also come up with an innovative solution to the ever-present problem of equipment storage: He located a

container from a container ship (in Bend?!), which has been installed in the parking lot at the local bus barn, free of charge. The locked container is now used to store the program's inventory of equipment for loan.

*Does your program have an innovative strategy for coping with a common problem or issue in educational practice? Send your ideas for the "Strategies Exchange" to Diana at the RSOI office.*

# Coming Events

**2nd National Inclusive Schools Week** • December 2-6. For a celebration kit and information about this annual event, see [www.edc.org/urban](http://www.edc.org/urban).

**Division of Early Childhood (DEC) 18th Annual Conference** on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families: "Recommended Practices for Changing Times" December 5-8, 2002, San Diego. See [www.dec-sped.org/DEC2002.html](http://www.dec-sped.org/DEC2002.html) for more information.

**Access Now Conference** • December 9 & 10, 2002, Sheraton Portland Airport. Contact RSOI for information.

**20th Annual TAM Conference:** "Capitalizing on Best Practices" will offer presentations on assistive and instructional technology, especially research and practical experience in implementing technology with students with disabilities. February 7-9, 2003, Reston, VA. See [www.tamcec.org/conf.html](http://www.tamcec.org/conf.html).

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1871 NE Stephens  
Roseburg, OR 97470

## 2002-03 School Year

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar for Feeding Teams** • February 3 & 4, 2003, Northwest Regional ESD, Hillsboro. Registration materials enclosed in this newsletter.

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual TIES Conference: Therapy in Educational Settings** • Keynote Speaker, Marc Marengo, Ph.D., Pacific University, "Ethical Decision-Making", April 7 & 8, 2003. Valley River Inn, Eugene. Presenter proposals included with this newsletter.

**CEC's Annual Convention & Expo** • April 9-11, 2003, Seattle, WA. See [www.cec.org](http://www.cec.org) for information.