



In Touch

The Newsletter of the Deafblind Multihandicapped
Association of Texas
Spring Edition ~April 2012

From the President's Pen



Another year has gone by with a lot going on as usual. Stakeholder meetings have been going on throughout the state with DARS and in Austin with DADS on all the different waivers. Thirteen members from DBMAT attended a DB-MD stakeholders meeting in Austin on March 2nd. DBMAT has been participating in all stakeholders meeting and giving our input on what our needs are in the different programs. Our input is very important with DADS so that they will know what they need to address in the next legislative session.

Our Family Conference in October was a big success. We were so fortunate to have Dr. Jan Van Dijk and Cheryl Ramey for our speakers. We all learned a lot and had fun too. The following officers were elected at the Board Meeting: Paul Welch – President, Vivecca Hartman – Treasurer; and as Members At Large - Denise Sewell, Jilliana Holt-Reuter, Oretha Thomas and Alaine Hinds.

We had some really great nominations for the awards this year. The following wards were given:

Christian Knapp The Great Motivator Award was given to Brett Simpson. The Everett Bryan Award was given to Jenny Lace. The Olivia Cruz Award was given to the Givens Family. This year I gave a special Presidential Award to Brad Carlson for all he has done in deaf-blindness and for DBMAT for so many years. Congratulations to all!

DBMAT Boards Members attended Leadership Training in Austin in February at TSBVI Outreach. It was a very productive training. There were several parent organizations that attended. Barry Silverberg worked with our groups on mission and vision for our organizations. We had a training in 2006 with Barry and that was when we as an organization set some new

goals. Our organization has accomplished most of the goals that we had set and now we are working on setting some new goals. This will help keep our organization on track.

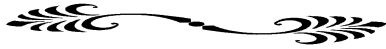
We can use some more people in our work groups. Please contact me or Steve if you would like to help with one of the work groups. Susie can also use articles for the next newsletter. We appreciate any and all help so please give us a call.

Don't forget to mark you calendars. Our Family Conference is October 12 – 14th at Camp John Marc. Also, Christian Knapp Memorial Golf Tournament November 2nd. Hope to see you there!

Paul Welch

Table of Contents

<i>President's Pen</i>	1
<i>Businessman receives awards</i>	2
<i>Stay With Me</i>	2
<i>We Are Not Just Getting Older,</i> <i>We are also Being...Blessed!</i>	4
<i>The Utah State College Course</i>	5
<i>Desiree Thompson, Intervener</i>	5
<i>How Deaf Blind Interaction Affected Me</i>	5
<i>DBMAT Committees</i>	6
<i>DBMAT 2012 Updated Mission, Vision &</i> <i>Principle Statements</i>	6
<i>Great Vacations for Special Needs Families</i>	7
<i>Community Participation</i>	9
<i>Texas HIPPP Program</i>	9
<i>In Memory of Hans Kurt Jansen</i>	10
<i>Obituary for Dennis Dildy</i>	10
<i>A Tribute to Jaceson</i>	12
<i>Presidential Transition</i>	13



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Businessman receives award at camp for motivating others

By David Ball
The Orange Leader

Brett Simpson is one impressive individual.

Though blind and deaf, not only does he own and operate Brett's Place, a snack bar at the main entrance of the Orange County Courthouse for the past two years. He received the "Christian Knapp Great Motivator" award for his work accomplishments at the Orange County court house.

Simpson attended the annual conference for Deaf Blind multihandicapped Association of Texas at Camp John Marc on October 15, north of Waco. The



Courtesy photo

Brett Simpson, owner and operator of Brett's Place, a snack bar at the main entrance of the Orange County Courthouse for the past two years, received the "Christian Knapp Great Motivator" award for his work accomplishments at the Orange County court house. Simpson attended the annual conference for Deaf Blind multihandicapped Association of Texas at Camp John Marc on October 15, north of Waco. The award named after a young man who's life was short but very motivating to others.

See **ACHIEVE**, Page 5A

ACHIEVE —

From Page 1A

"Brett and family feel Orange County should share in Brett's joy. The county employees played a big part in Brett achieving this award," the press release read.

In a prior Leader article, JoAnn Priddy said her son could stay home, but he wouldn't like it.

"He loves people. He's made a lot of friends. It's like a family here," she said.

He goes to work every weekday. In fact, he

loves to come to work.

"He's always been independent. He was taught that at an early age," his mother said. "His favorite part of the job is talking to people. He likes visiting. He's very social. He could stay at home but he wouldn't be happy.

"No matter what he's doing, he will always want to help other people."

Simpson gets up on his own at 5:30 a.m. everyday and gets to work by 7:20 a.m. His coworker, Amanda Dille, gives him a ride to work and he sings in the car the entire time.

Simpson graduated

from Port Neches-Groves High School in 2006. Following that, he attended the School for the Blind in Austin for two years. The school made a video of him working at the snack bar.

There, they taught him important skills such as a tactile grocery list for supplies and he can read simple Braille. He also keeps up with the keys and folds the money a certain way to count it.

He worked in the library at the school and at the food bank in Austin.

Before school, he worked in the office for

Campfire Girls and Boys.

He's a member of the Federation for the Blind that meets the third Tuesday of the month at the Salvation Army at the corner of MLK Drive and Strickland in Orange. Priddy said the organization is seeking other blind people to join.

Plus, he was involved in several youth organizations growing up including at church. He won the best camper

award at the Deaf Lions Camp this summer near Waco.

If that wasn't enough, Simpson also won an award from the Diocese of Beaumont.

Simpson succeeds Burt Hardwick who had the stand for 30 years. He had to retire because of health reasons.

The business was already set up for a blind person and it was a perfect place for him, Priddy said.

Simpson also has a device that enables him to hear over environmental noise that's a big help.

He'll be celebrating his two year anniversary on August 6. The Orange County Commissioners' Court voted to give the contract to Simpson.

"I love him," Dille said. "He's a nice boss. He lines me out. He's structured and organized."



Stay With Me

By: Catherine Allen

Rachel and I were sitting at Children's Medical Center for an appointment a few weeks ago. (She sits very close when we're at the hospital.) Even though she's in High School now, being at the hospital still makes her feel like she needs to sit in my lap. Recognizing her anxiety, I try to address it directly, "This is going to be a 'no hurting' appointment." She asks, "What is the doctor going to do to me?" "The doctor is going to talk to us and probably check your reflexes, look in your ears and your mouth, and press on your stomach."

She relaxes a little and pulls out her pretend phone to call her pretend friends (you may have heard of them, Hannah Montana and Katy Perry?) to tell them that this is a 'no-hurting' appointment and they don't have to worry.

The child inside her is afraid. I'm glad she knows she can come to me to get answers and reassurance. The teenager inside her is confident, so grown up, echoing my words, my reassurances...learning, at her own pace and in her own way, how to deal with life.

As I watch her, I can't help overhearing a conversation from a mom behind me about her child's reaction to certain things and how the professionals are misinterpreting it as bad behavior. The mom is discouraged. I can hear it in her voice. I drift off into my own thoughts, my own exhaustion, and my own discouragements. I tell myself "This is

not a time for helping others. Focus on what you need, on what you're going to discuss with the doctor."

It's true. I'm the needy one today.

But being at this hospital, I see so much behind the faces of those in the hallways and waiting rooms. I see children, obviously injured or impaired, a mixture of anxiety and impishness on their face. They are the sages~filled with wisdom gained from suffering and innocence....reality infused with child-like faith.

I see the faces of Moms and Dads, their expressions forced into masks that hide their fears, their doubts; their determination to do what they must for their child, no matter the cost to themselves.

I focus again on the woman behind me, pretending I don't hear; giving her privacy to vent her fears in this public place. But then her discouragement takes on an edge...I recognize it as a sudden, if momentary, hopelessness.

I turn to her, unable to stop myself, offer apologies for eavesdropping and meet her eyes with understanding and a smile. "You have a lot of observations about your child that are very valuable. Don't discount them just because a professional doesn't understand...yet." I ask if she's ever heard of Sensory Integration Disorder and tell her if she Googles it she will find her child's behavior explained there. I rattle off a few websites, as the nurse calls Rachel's name, aware that even if she doesn't remember the web address, she will not forget what they represent...answers...Hope.

She thanks me and longingly says, "I wish we could talk more." I smile as I quickly gather Rachel and all our things and move toward the door, "Me, too." I say.

When we reenter the waiting room sometime later, the Mom and child are gone.

A twinge deep inside fills me with guilt, "Why didn't I think to give her my card?"

Helping others is a way of life for me. Choosing not to help, feels like building a wall of protection around myself and finding that I am now locked in solitary confinement with my own neediness, and no way to escape.

Taking 120 seconds to remind someone of their value? So worth the investment!

When I speak or write to others, I find that it is usually something I need to hear myself.

I wonder if there is a correlation between being open to authentic compassion for others and being open to authentic compassion for myself. I wonder if being willing to step in and offer help to another has any correlation to my willingness to allow others to offer help to me.

This gives a whole new meaning to the phrases "you reap what you sow" and "you get what you give," because I usually hear these in a negative context. But if they are true in the negative, aren't they also true in the positive?

If I am only willing to help when I have time (which I never do,) will anyone ever have time to help me?

I started this line of thinking by mentally beating myself up, but have brought myself around to some authentic evaluation. It's true that as a caregiver I need to protect my time and set boundaries. My time is very precious and valuable. It's also true that I need to be just as protective of the opportunities that come my way, meant for my own healing and that of others.

Instead of guarding myself against what I don't need, I want to open myself up to what I do need and what is mine to do in this world.

Guarding against what we 'don't' want shuts us down. Looking for what we 'do' want opens us up. That's the way I want to live~open to opportunities to love and be loved; to help and be helped.

Emerging from my reverie, I turn my attention back to Rachel. We have to wait in the same waiting room for further tests. I've explained that she will get some x-rays and blood work while we're here. She knows taking her blood will hurt. She's chatting on her phone again and, as she flips it closed, she announces in sign language that Justin Bieber (umm, her husband) has to leave now to go to work. She sits quietly, and I watch her, thinking about the announcement and what it means to her. She's overly calm. Detached.

Finally I say, “Do you want him to stay? He loves you and cares about your feelings. I’m sure he will stay if he knows it’s important to you. It’s okay to tell him what you want.”

She thinks about this, then again flips open her phone and makes a call. I hear her explaining and asking, although I can’t understand her spoken words. She closes the phone again and signs happily, “He’s going to stay.”

I know it’s all make believe, but I’m suddenly grateful for this pretend Justin Bieber. I’m proud of Rachel for taking the risk to ask for what she wants, what she needs, even from a pretend friend. She has worked out a dilemma through play that she now understands enough to put into practice in the real world.

She has used her imagination to decide what she wants, and she has asked for it. The best part is that the response also came from inside of her. She expected that she would get what she asked for. This is what I want for her (and for me,) to pursue with determination the good things she wants out of life, and fully expect them to happen.

Yes, I hear you. My doubts and realism are screaming at me, too. But, you know what? Today, I’m going to be thankful for finding positive meanings in negative statements. I’m going to be thankful for an intense compassion that will not let me miss an opportunity to be helped, by helping someone else. And mostly I’m going to be thankful today for pretend celebrities that my daughter has on speed dial.



We Are Not Just Getting Older, We Are Also Being....Blessed!

By: Bud and Lynn Freeman

Our son, Sandy who has been Deaf-Blind since birth will be celebrating his 54th birthday this year and is Thriving not just Surviving! We feel like, even though he has many challenges he still laughs and enjoys life.



Sandy with Gay Bellamy.

Sandy lived at home until his late teens and attended a day program for the deaf-blind in Dallas. He had a collie dog at home that joined him in his pursuit of happiness. They would play together inside and outside and share in their mischief! His dog knew instantly when Sandy was doing something that might hurt him, such as, hanging by his knees from his swing set. The dog would come and tell us by barking and lead us to where Sandy was. All the kids in the neighborhood would join Sandy where he was outside jumping on his trampoline and the dog would tell us if they were doing something dangerous like jumping too high or there were more than one on the trampoline at a time. Sometimes when they were both into mischief he wouldn't let us know...then they might be chewing on something leather like one of our belts or the tops of our shoes.

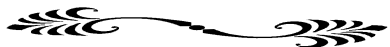
Sandy had a younger brother who learned from observing him.

Sandy was admitted to a program that was set-up for the Deaf-Blind at Abilene State School-Residential. When this program, specifically, for the Deaf-Blind was discontinued, Sandy was able to go to a Mental Health and Retardation group home in Mineral Wells for five years. Because the staff at this group home had no special training in Deaf-Blindness, Sandy presented a real problem for them.

In 1995 Sandy was scheduled to go to Abilene State School but he was again blessed because the DBMD Waiver program was being expanded. Sandy was accepted into a group home in San Antonio staffed by Goodwill Industry with specially trained caregivers in Deaf-Blindness. We understand that now there are college credit courses offered for special training in Deaf-Blindness for Interveners. This has been brought about by the parents and professionals that are members of the Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas.

Sandy continued to be blessed in the group home in many daily activities now owned by a private organization called "Hands On"(primarily funded by the DBMD Waiver). They have over twenty clients in this San Antonio program. Sandy and the other clients are able to live a normal life, in the community close to family and friends. He has specially trained caregivers with a three to one staff ratio on a 24/7 schedule.

Even though we are truly blessed we have to be diligent in our advocacy for the challenges facing the Deaf-Blind and their unique special needs. It is incumbent to the Deaf-Blind community to provide information to our leadership (DBMAT President and our State Legislators) on the Deaf-Blind children/adults needs. The next legislative year is going to be more difficult and we will need to make sure that they hear our voice!

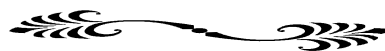
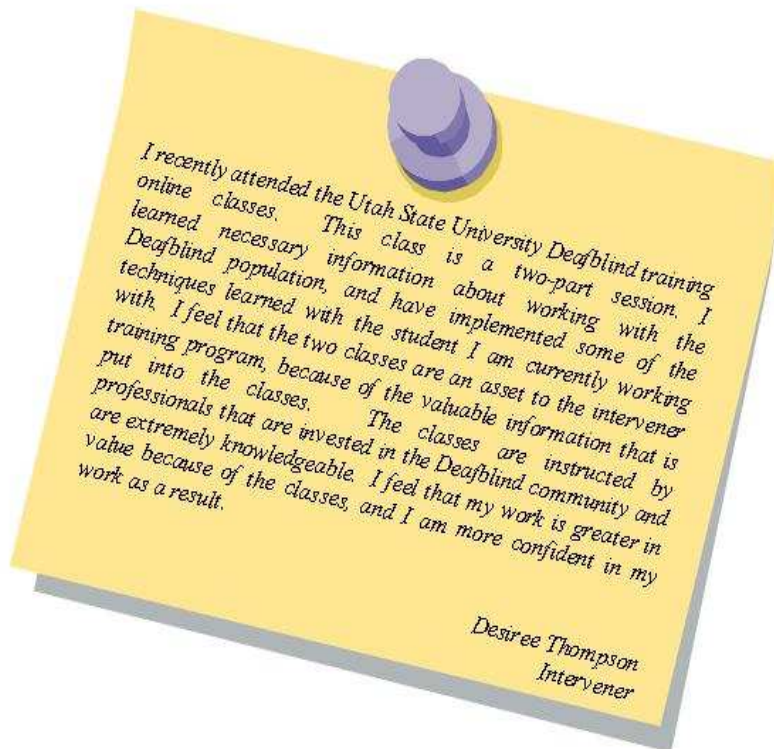


The Utah State College Course

By Mark Hartsfield

I have worked with people with various disabilities for 30 years. I thought that taking the Deaf Blind course would be a review. Much to my surprise I found that people with deaf-blindness are in a unique situation. The inability to learn incidentally, something hearing and sighted people take for granted, can be devastating. I have learned to be more understanding of the gaps in the knowledge of the people I work with now. The course taught techniques that I have started to use on a regular basis. I work with one individual who is blind and strive to describe the surroundings more to encourage him to be where we are and discuss his impressions. He tends to discuss past experiences and often misses out on what we are attending to presently. I also work with one individual who is deaf and since my sign language skills are weak he has become my teacher. He will show me a sign for something then when we encounter that object again he will ask me for the sign. Sometimes he will seek out pictures and ask for the sign. He seems very happy to do this as it boosts his self-esteem. In return I take him places to broaden his horizons. It is a relationship that works nicely. All 4 of the individuals I work with have taught while there are many adaptations for people with physical

disabilities; ie ramps, door openers, handicapped parking etc. There is still a need for adaptivity for people with deaf-blindness. I recommend this course for anyone working with people who are deaf blind.

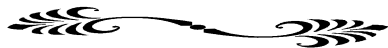


How Deaf Blind Interaction Influenced Me

By Rodney J. Richardson

My Name is Rodney J Richardson I am currently a Correctional Officer 3 with Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice. I work in an environment that many would say is insane. Bottom line, prison is a place full of isolation, anger, sadness. Manipulation, danger, and any other extreme you might could imagine. But so is being deaf blind. The enormous challenges a deaf blind individual has to overcome encompasses all of these emotions and feelings. My interaction with a deaf blind individual was with Christian Knapp, I had never had any formal training or experience in deaf blindness and I was doing work for a temp agency when Christian was referred to me. I had no idea of what to expect. When I met his parents and met him I knew it would not be a typical client I usually cared for. I actively began trying to

learn his routine and the necessary means of communication to meet and fulfill his needs. Mom and Dad and other very special people in his life helped me open up a world to myself and to him that I still miss very much to this day. The trips to the vending machine, the trips to the store, the days at Half Price Books, and the outings to the mall, are just the tip of the iceberg. His interaction to the outside world through me and the way I tried to bring it to him taught us both so much. The orientation and mobility specialist amplified and brought some more tools to the process of this new phase in his life. I believe we had just gotten started when life got cut short. When Christian died a piece of me went with him. I know other people who had worked with him for a number of years and especially mom and dad hurt more than me but just the same I still feel its effects to this day. The lesson I learned that Christian taught me and even at my current job the lesson is especially true, live life to the fullest every useful tool or resource you have utilize it to reach your maximum potential. Never give up and think that all is lost, use what you have, try to expand from there. Christian, I know you look down from heaven at me I hope I am handling my new insane world the way I should be. The lessons I learned from you I try to take with me everywhere. Thank you for opening my eyes and my mind to what working with deaf blind individuals and interveners deal with every day. I will never forget my experiences with you.



DBMAT Committees

By Vivecca Hartman

DBMAT Committees: DBMAT loves to have new ideas and other people's involvement! We are most effective, when we divide and conquer our time and talents! In order to assist us in being able to do this, we have focus group committees that you can select one (or more 😊) to join. The purposes of these committees are briefly defined as follows:

Legislative: To obtain and share legislative (both state and federal) information that affects people who are deaf blind and multihandicapped with the whole group. When there is action to be taken, where DBMAT may have an impact, this committee

can organize and plan an approach for all to be able to participate.

Fundraising: To organize and communicate fund raising tips for all to participate in.

Conference Planning: To organize and plan the annual conference. The majority of the work for this committee is via conference calls starting 6 months prior to each annual conference.

Education: To organize ideas that are good for sharing amongst our families. Based on each family's experiences and tips and tricks learned, one of the goals of this committee is to have a web-based place for knowledge sharing.

Regional Coordinators: To have a DBMAT member in each region of Texas as a contact person for any new locals that want to reach out and talk to someone close by.



DBMAT 2012 Updated Mission, Vision & Principle Statements

By The DBMAT Board

Mission — The mission of DBMAT is to promote and improve the quality of life for all Texans who are deaf-blind multihandicapped. We support the establishment of educational, rehabilitative, vocational and independent living opportunities of these individuals for all ages.

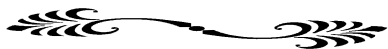
Vision — DBMAT recognizes that people who are deaf-blind multihandicapped will benefit from the provision of Quality Intervener Services lifelong. When intervener services are provided from the age of diagnosis, the person who is deaf-blind multihandicapped is most likely to develop to their full potential with an abundance of "Moments of Joy", (as defined by Dr. Jan van Dijk). As the person who is deaf-blind grows, his/her needs will change, but quality intervener services will always be required.

The DBMAT Board recognizes their primary goal is to advocate for quality Intervention to be available to all deaf-blind individuals who could benefit from it, until it is it is a viable option legally allowable to all

who want to request it. The commitment to this goal began during their Board meeting, held on June 9, 2006 and continues to be a primary focus today. In addition to the primary goal, we advocate for all deaf-blind individuals to have access to the services applicable for their individual needs.

It is DBMAT's vision to provide to individuals who are deaf-blind multihandicapped, as well as their families, access to other members, training opportunities, social events, as well as resources for which we maintain or have the ability to direct our members to.

Principles — We promote family education and understanding of our deaf-blind multihandicapped family member's abilities and disabilities. We offer resource information and referral to families, professionals, state agencies, and provider agencies serving people who are deaf-blind multihandicapped of all ages.



Great Vacations For Special Needs Families

By Ellen Seidman, via Jacque Carrillo

(<http://www.parents.com/blogs/to-the-max/2012/01/03/uncategorized/great-vacations-for-special-needs-families/?sssdmh=dm17.583677&esrc=nwpce022712&email=3458363634>)



Finding a good place to vacation when you have a kid with special needs isn't always easy (understatement alert). Depending on your child's abilities, you need to assess

accessibility. And if you want childcare—my husband and I always do, so we can relax because we so deserve it—you have to call ahead and make sure the place is amenable to hosting kids with special needs.

Over the years, we've had great experiences with [Disney Cruises](#) and [Disney World; Franklyn D. Resort & Spa](#) in Jamaica (where every family gets their own vacation nanny); [Woodloch resort](#) in The Poconos; [the Sugarbush Resort](#) in Warren, Vermont (where Max skied with [Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports](#)) and, as of last week, Park City, Utah.



We stayed at the beautiful [Deer Valley Resort](#), located a minute's drive away from skiing at Snow Park Lodge. There are readily available shuttles to transport guest everywhere, a wonderful thing if your child is obsessed with all things that go, as [Max](#) is. [The Deer Valley Children's Center](#) offers state-licensed childcare for babies age two months to 12 years, and are exceptionally welcoming to children of all abilities. Max blissfully hung out there for a few mornings (he called it "ski school"). We also roamed around Park City, visiting the [Utah Olympic Park](#) (site of several 2002 Olympic events) and the child-friendly [Park City Museum](#). The dining options are abundant; favorites included [Fireside Dining at Empire Canyon Lodge](#), [The Mariposa](#) and the Skier's Buffet at [Stein Eriksen Lodge](#).

What drew us to Park City is [The National Ability Center](#), which offers year-round, affordable outdoor sports and recreation activities for people with disabilities, along with summer camps.



The NAC campus features [a lodge](#) with 26 fully accessible rooms; they're available to those participating in NAC activities and their families. During winter, rates are an extremely reasonable \$70 a night.



Max got an awesome instructor, Kevin, who knew exactly how to make Max comfortable. He gave Max a rubber wheel and asked him to steer left and right as if he were Lightning McQueen, the Cars character Max idolizes.



Within minutes, Max was gliding along, with Kevin's assistance. Clips on the front of his skis held them parallel.



There's a hippotherapy program in a 17,000 square foot heated indoor arena.

We came for the adaptive skiing, offered through the NAC at three locations: Park City Mountain Resort, Snow Lodge and Canyons. I booked three three-hour sessions for Max at \$100 each, with a ski pass included; you rent skis separately.



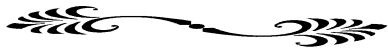
Max also rode the magic carpet, which was a little tricky when it came to balance but he hung in there. Overall, Max had a blast and built up confidence in his abilities. And that's both his and my idea of a good time.

Other programs that offer adaptive skiing for kids with special needs include the [National Sports Center for the Disabled](#) in Winter Park, Colorado; the [Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center](#), also in Colorado; and [Stride Adaptive Sports](#) which offers skiing in Hancock, MA, Hillsdale, NY, and New Hartford, CT. Many other ski resorts around the country have adaptive ski programs; just Google "adaptive skiing" for your area.

What sort of great vacation spots has your family been to?

Please, share your ideas!

Categories: [Autism](#), [Cerebral Palsy](#), [Children With Special Needs](#), [Disability](#), [Down Syndrome](#), [Must Read](#), [SPD](#), [Special Needs](#), [Special Needs Parenting](#), [To The Max](#) | Tags: [aptive skiing for kids](#), [health](#), [Special needs families vacations](#), [Special needs vacations](#)
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Community Participation

By Wayne Thompson

Every four years about this time our nation starts the process of electing our president and other legislators to represent us in Washington, DC and around the world. We are one of a few countries in the world that have these free elections where each person is allowed to cast a vote.

I am disappointed each election year with the number of persons who choose not to be part of the process. Some of these people are the ones who complain the loudest when things aren't going the way they think best. I have heard many people say that their vote

won't make a difference in the outcome. I wonder what would happen if we all felt that way? Would our leaders be appointed? If so, by whom...

I can draw a parallel to many of the organizations I am affiliated with. In most instances only a few become actively involved, especially when it comes to holding offices within the group. I have been totally blessed and enlightened by serving on committees and to have held some leadership offices. I personally know that my activities with DBMAT have made a difference in our community. Each of us has the opportunity to impact the entities that serve our families and loved ones with deaf blindness and multiple disabilities.

We all have heard the phrase "the silent majority". It appears to me that if the "silent majority" would cease the silence, we would have a more well-rounded and balanced government system.

I feel the same way about DBMAT. The more people that step up and become leaders and inspired members, the organization would become stronger and have more impact than we already have.

I have served with some of the greatest leaders and members of DBMAT. I stand in awe of their dedication to our group. DBMAT is approaching its 40th year of existence. I feel that if we want to continue to impact the changes that are being made in many of our programs, it is time to step up.

I am acquainted with many of you who are with DBMAT. I know that each of you have much to offer. Let us all "step up" in some way that will assure that DBMAT remains strong and active for at least another 40 years.

God Bless the USA and God Bless DBMAT.



The Texas HIPP Program

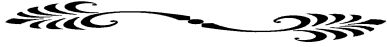
Submitted By Cyndi Hunley

The Texas HIPP program (Health Insurance Premium Payment) helps families with an individual on Medicaid. The program helps reimburse families for health insurance premiums if one

member is on Medicaid.

You do have to qualify for this program.

This program benefits Medicaid because it may reimburse the premiums, but Medicaid is the secondary insurance and does not have the major expense. Also, if the person has insurance there are more choices for doctors.
The website is www.HIPPTEXAS.com or call 1-800-440-0493.



In Memory of Hans Kurt Jansen

February 8, 1996 - February 9, 2012

By Peggy Miller with permission from the Jansen Family

Hans Kurt Jansen was born into a loving family on February 8, 1996. Born in Mexico, his family moved to Illinois in 2001; the for services for the deaf; they moved to Austin in 2007 because they heard about Texas School for the Deaf. In Austin, Hans lived with his supportive family, his father, Alex Jansen, mother, Samara Jansen, younger brother Alek and his grandmother Kathy.

Hans was a beloved student in the Special Needs Department at Texas School for the Deaf from 2007-2012. He also participated in the Summer Program at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Camp Summit and this past year, through special collaboration between TSBVI and TSD, Hans was able to enjoy activities with his interveners from TSD at TSBVI two days a week. He was supported by a team which included DARS-Division for Blind Services, Texas Deafblind Outreach and his medical team in Austin. To all those he met, he left his mark on their hearts.

Hans was always busy, always curious, always full of a strong spirit. His precious heart was kind and he thought of amazing things to do in his mind. Hans was willing to try new ways in the face of incredible challenges. When he could no longer see, he found ways to make us see and touch and feel and smell the world around us. We are all richer for that experience.

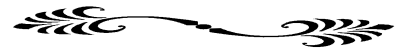
Hans often made us puzzle and think, "Just how did he figure THAT out??" How did he keep hidden for

four months, the doctor's diopter when everyone was standing right there with Hans in the office? How did he draw an accurate picture of his brother's new room when he had never seen it before? How did he know where every fire alarm was on the walls and then sometimes, pulled them? How did he know where you kept your black (not blue) markers? How did he know where everything was kept in the science lab after reading his tactile symbol map just one day? Hans was so creative and bright.

Hans loved balloons, sparklers, laser lights and glow sticks, Super Mario Brothers, pizza, ice cream and rainy days, cameras, swimming, gameboys, Nintendo DS, blue tape, foam letters and foam sheets, black TV, different size bags and police cars. When Hans shared a smile and his lively laugh, he made you smile and stop what you were doing to enjoy the delight. A beautiful lesson for each of us.

Hans loved his family and had a very special relationship with his teachers and interveners.

May the sun never set on the special memories we each have of Hans and may he live in our hearts forever.



Obituary for Dennis Dildy

Submitted By Larry Johnson, via Gay Bellamy

Dennis Robert Dildy born August 21, 1942 in Pontiac Michigan to Lionel William Dildy and Kay Yvonne Warner was welcomed into Jesus' arms on January 21, 2012 in Amarillo, TX. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 3 P.M. at Trinity Baptist Church Thrift Chapel at 319 E. Mulberry San Antonio, TX 78212.

He received his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Special Education from the University of Michigan. He began his career as a probation officer as well as deaf-blind instructor and special education teacher in Michigan from 1965 to 1975. He and his first wife, Mary, lovingly adopted Denise and Matthew Dildy in

Michigan prior to their divorce. In Michigan, he was the first Governor appointed Director of Probation for the 35th District Court. He received the Michigan Jaycees "Outstanding Young Man Award for Civic Service" in 1969. He and his first wife, Mary, lovingly adopted Denise and Matthew Dildy prior to their divorce. In 1975 he married Denniece Nicholson moving to San Antonio, TX and adopting James and Jason Simpson, and then Tiffany was born in 1976.

In San Antonio he began working as a deaf-blind special education teacher in the Harlandale ISD in 1975 as well as helping to establish the first public school program for community based work for deaf-blind students ages 14-22 before beginning a long career as an education coordinator for the Region 20 education service center from 1976 through 1991. He was the first educator to establish real work sites for the severely disabled in Texas as well as a 24 hour/day training center for such students. At Region 20, he served as a State of Texas licensed Child Care Administrator as well as continuing to provide technical assistance and providing consultation to education professionals, parents and students on a local, regional, state and national level by writing numerous grant applications and negotiating for local school districts and working with the Texas Commission of the Blind, Texas Department of Health as well as the Texas MHMR and the Texas Human Resources Commission.

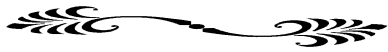
During the 70's and 80's he was very active in organizations including co-founder of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities in San Antonio in 1980 and co-founder of San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) where he served for 9 years providing referral and peer counseling services to persons with disabilities in Bexar and surrounding counties being the first disability operated Independent Living Services agency in San Antonio and the fourth in Texas. He served on the Board of the Deaf-Blind Multi-handicapped Association of Texas from 1976 to 1993 and was the first non-disabled adult or parent given the privilege to serve as president of the association from 1990-1993. He also worked with the U.S. Dept. of Education office of Special Education and Rehabilitation as a Peer Grant Reviewer in Washington D.C. for a 20 year period during his career. He served on the advisory committee for Texas Department of Human

Resources for 10 years and on the advisory board of Job Lead, Inc., a non-profit organization serving as a referral agent for qualified disabled applicants seeking employment for 7 years. He was a speaker and workshop presenter for educators across the state and country. He was awarded the Gene Karaffa Award presented by the Texas Association of the Blind and Visually-Impaired in 1987 and made an Honorary life member of the San Antonio NE Lions Club for exemplary work in the conduction of Deaf-Blind Summer Camps. He was awarded the Aubrey Boyd Tipps Memorial Award for the outstanding service in the field of placement of the blind in employment in 1985 and awarded the U.S. Department of Education innovative exemplary model demonstration programs in 1980-1983 and 1986-1989 gaining national recognition for innovative practices in community based services for Deaf-Blind youth.

In 1989, he received his PhD in Education Administration from Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, Fl. He returned to the classroom in 1991 teaching special education to severely emotionally disturbed children ages ranging from 5th to 8th grade in Schertz-Cibolo ISD and working as a part-time counselor for troubled teens at Teen Connection as well as marriage and substance abuse counselor in New Braunfels, TX. During this time he also began working for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission disability Determination Division in Austin, TX from 1991-1993. He then returned again to the classroom in 1992 through 2004.

In 2008, he moved to Wellington, TX at the request of his daughter to be closer due to his poor health. His body weakened to the point of kidney and heart failure in the end and although he had decided to fight and start dialysis, his Creator called him home to be with Him, no longer suffering and without pain, thanks to the great grace of our Heavenly Father and the loving sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Dennis was a loving father, grandfather and brother that loved helping people and spent his life trying to make better the lives of those less fortunate, and he will be missed dearly. He is survived by his sisters Linda Dwyer and Lolly Medellin and brother, Kevin Dildy; his children Denise Dildy of Lima, OH., Matthew Dildy of Wapakoneta, OH., James Simpson and Jason Dildy of San Antonio, TX.,

and Tiffany Dildy Wilson of Wellington, TX.; and his grandchildren Jzmine, Tesla, Stephen, Devin, Brittany, Alexandria, Brett, Bradley, Blake, Logan and Kaleb. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD), a non-profit organization that he co-founded in 1980. Donations in honor of Dennis' life's work can be sent by mail to CTD 316 W. 12th St. Suite 405, Austin, TX 78701.



A Tribute to Jaceson

By Janice (Luth) Rafferty

February 22, 1979----

A son born to Susie and Paul,
Their first born.

Another president? Perhaps a flying Ace"?
His future with no limits, parents with many dreams.
Coddled and hugged, nurtured by so much love
Could not change nature's own omission
Just a chromosome, but the missing link.

His first fight began, just weeks old
Doctors/nurses Their family now,
Sights, sounds, smells, so different
A tiny body unyielding—unaware
Cradled in his mother's arms
Dad at cockpit helm soared the Texas skies
Chemo treatments raging war
A real battle for this newborn "ace"

A spirit so alive prevailed,
A parents' faith so strong
A victory unmatched,
A miracle of life won.

His journey continues, still infant in size
A babe in arms, five years have passed,
Unable to see, can't crawl or walk
Does not speak or eat alone,
Are mom's songs ever heard,
as she rocks him to and fro?
Unknown potential, unseen, unheard, unfelt
Locked within him, His future---
A president never to be, Won't see the sky to fly
But will he soar, as his parents believe?

Therapies replace treatments, uncharted goals,
Hundreds of repetitive session,
He's eight now,

~12

A door cracks open, Jaceson's first step
"One small step" for him,
"One giant leap" for Mom and Dad.
He scores a victory, time and patience persevered,
Setbacks overcome, his walk in life now begun,
More doors could open,
his parents believe with certitude.

Today's his birthday, February 22, 2012
Twenty-five birthdays have passed
A child-size man now thirty three
Has opened locked doors, no key did he need
Love from parents, family and friends
And a medical entourage with demands
Brought him closer, a step at a time
Took 25 years, but that is fine.
What doors were opened?

Can eat with a spoon, a bib is a must
Raises his arms, as the shirt slips down his trunk
Can tug up his drawers after leaving his waste
Will grab all his pills, and bring to his face
Walks on a treadmill to keep his weight down,
Then goes and bakes cookies to help his dear Mom
When clothes are dirty to the washer he goes
When drying is done, removes his clean clothes
Pushes the shopping cart, as Mom does the picking
When they get home Dad does the cooking
Swims in the pool like a fish in the water
Loving the freedom, no resistance to encounter
Attended high school, socialization his major
Graduated with peers, a standing ovation no error
At prom in tuxedo he never sat down
The girls kept him dancing never to frown
Worked at a nursery watering the trees for the boss
Always stood still, never got lost
Delivered charts to the stations,
For the vets there confined
When Bingo was called, brought them their prize
Hours volunteering, continued to climb
A certificate awarded, marked all his time
The veterans all loved him, A grandfather too
Giving Jaceson a chance, for the red, white, and blue
Jaceson's hours of giving, no oath did he take
Brought pride to the family, their patriotism to stake
Each year there is camp with the others he knows
It's fun and exciting, for the campers who go.

It's twenty-five years since that first step he took
His parents' convictions could write a good book
The doors have opened to the great yonder sky

Jacson has soared It's no wonder why
Never a word we've heard from his lips
Just a deep belly laugh that grabs your midriff

No word can he write, but a hug he will give
A Squeeze that's so strong you'll never forget
Does not cry or get angry, behaves all the time
Brings joy to his home where loves thrives sublime
Depends on his Dad to shave him each day
Taking a bath, in his way he plays
Can sit there for hours and fondle his toys
Pressing the buttons as each makes a noise
He's learning to sign, Mom's a fine teacher
This door as it opens, another good feature
He's always so happy, like the sound of a lark
The first born, a son, An "ace" in their Heart.

Happy Birthday to Jacson, to a boy yet a man
Your life as a Welch, was truly God's plan.

*With love and admiration for a remarkable individual
who's place on earth was chosen to be with
Susie and Paul Welch---their amazing blessing from
above.*

*Written by a life-long friend,
Janice (Luth) Rafferty*



Time for Presidential Transition

By Paul Welch

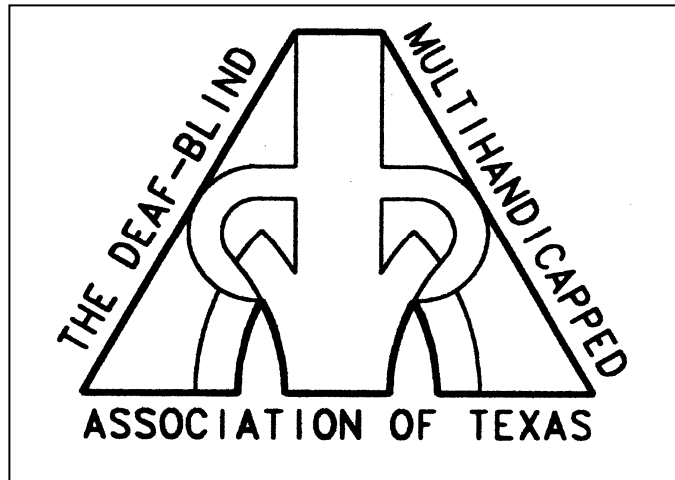
I've been President of DBMAT since October, 2003. . .
I'm very pleased with the progress we've made as an
organization. Our advocacy has resulted in a better world
for people who are deafblind with multiple disabilities. I
wanted to be the short-term President who made a
difference. But, for DBMAT to remain a vital and
dynamic institution, a change in the guard needs to take
place. Without change, stagnation occurs. This is one of
the many reasons why most organizations (even our
country)

have term limits for Presidents. So, I'm hoping that
among the members of DBMAT reading this letter, there
is at least one individual who says, "I can do this. I should
be the next President of DBMAT." I can promise you that
you will find a great deal of joy and satisfaction in
working with the wonderful families of DBMAT and the
larger deafblind service community. If you want to
discuss this possibility, please call or email me. I will still
be around to help in any way I can because this is a
lifetime commitment for our families.

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If you would like to be dropped from DBMAT mailing list or have a change of address
please contact: Paul Welch – Big Spring, TX.