

## FRONT COVER

{NMSBVI Logo}

# New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

# Annual Report

*Serving the Children of New Mexico Since 1903!*

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## PAGE 2

October 28, 2022

Dear NMSBVI Family and Partners,

This report shows the breadth of services that NMSBVI provided to the children and youths with vision impairments or blindness in the state of New Mexico during the 2021-2022 school year. This school year was a celebrated return to in-person learning, which is the most effective form of learning for our student population. NMSBVI was acutely aware of the impacts that the pandemic had on our students' learning and emotional well-being. NMSBVI staff prioritized individual student learning as well as social-emotional support. NMSBVI adopted a social-emotional curriculum as well as new academic curricula as part of these priorities. We also increased supports from our social workers and psychologist.

Though the year continued to show us challenges, we celebrate our many triumphs by showcasing our programs, our students, and our many initiatives, which include research projects, parent and educator state-wide trainings, and extra-curricular experiences. These pages will show examples of the depth and breadth of our programming for New Mexico students with vision impairments/blindness and their families and educators.

NMSBVI is grateful to our many partners and stakeholders. The funding that NMSBVI receives is used to support our two campuses as well as our many statewide programs that serve the children of New

Mexico with vision impairments and blindness from birth to 22 years of age throughout the state. The support we receive assists NMSBVI in achieving our mission to be “an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-high school who are blind or visually impaired.” NMSBVI is a unique community filled with passionate, committed, creative experts who strive to do everything to support student success. Our students and families are an inspiration to us and play a huge part in our NMSBVI community. I am proud to be a part of this!

Thank you and join us in celebrating our students!  
*Patricia Beecher, NMSBVI Superintendent*

*{Caption: Superintendent Patty Beecher poses with Corey Apgar before Graduation.}*

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## NMSBVI Board of Regents

### Board of Regents (autumn 2022):

Mary Willows, Member (Albuquerque)  
email: [MaryWillows@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:MaryWillows@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)

Gary Smethurst, Vice-President (Albuquerque)  
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Agnes Vallejos, President (Los Lunas)  
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Robyn Holmes, Secretary (Alamogordo)  
email: [RobynHolmes@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:RobynHolmes@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)

*{Caption: The NMSBVI Board of Regents stand for a photo. L to R: Mary Willows, Gary Smethurst, Catherine Gray, Agnes Vallejos, and Robyn Holmes.}*

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## Our Ongoing Mission

NMSBVI, an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-to-high-school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify students and promote quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners through outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus empowering all students who are blind or visually impaired to become independent, productive members of their communities.

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## Strategic Plan

NMSBVI's Strategic Plan drives decision-making at every level. In place from 2019-2024, this plan centers on six overarching goals that support all of the initiatives of the school. Each goal has action steps and timelines to provide clarity and direction for our staff and maintain our focus on educating students with vision impairments and blindness throughout the state. The goals include:

1. Supporting systems that result in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment in the state;
  2. Creating a system to convey & receive information about blindness;
  3. Building, maintaining, and supporting a system of data-driven decision-making to help support the needs of the students throughout New Mexico;
  4. Developing a system throughout the state that supports early identification as well as successful transition of students across programs and into adult life;
  5. Developing and maintaining partnerships and resources that will be used to advance the success of each student.
  6. Developing systems to document, share and advance the efficacy of NMSBVI practices for educating students with visual impairments using the core and expanded core curricula.
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# History of Our School

In 1903, the NM Territorial Legislature approved funding to establish what was then known as The Institute for the Blind. The \$8,000 appropriated resulted in the first building, approximately one mile north of the fledgling community of Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Nineteen years later, \$65,000 for new buildings was raised thanks to the efforts of Superintendent R.R. Pratt, and blindness advocates, Helen Keller and Elizabeth Garrett (daughter of famous NM sheriff, Pat Garrett).

To serve children ages 3-6, a new campus in Albuquerque was established in 1974. Our network of services expanded even further in the 1990s to include a statewide Birth to Three Program, which continues to provide home-based services to very young children with visual impairments and their families. To continue meeting the needs of students, even more innovative programs and resources have been added to include low-vision clinics, the technology lending library, Instructional Resource Center, and a university teacher preparation program.

Historically, blind students were taught piano tuning and chair caning as potential professions. Today, our students initiate individualized career plans, with job and life skills as a central focus for goal-setting. The Expanded Core Curriculum, braille, and travel skills are also woven into instruction to ensure that students have the maximum opportunity for success and independence in their life after school.

*{Caption: Historic photo of NM Institute for the Blind students and teachers sitting on the lawn in front of the first building on campus.}*

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PAGE 4

## Financial Data

### Chart 1: FY22 Actuals to FY23 Budget Unaudited

(Bar graph: blue=FY22 Actuals; red=FY23 Budget. Y-axis=\$1,000,000 to \$9,000,000 in 1 million increments; X-axis=program categories)

Program Category	FY22 Actuals	FY23 Budget
Direct Instruction	\$6,474,151	\$8,017,806
Academic Support	\$4,463,099	\$5,370,213
Student Support	\$2,443,271	\$3,312,076

Institutional Support	\$2,643,387	\$3,475,831
Operations and Plant Maintenance	\$1,877,130	\$2,368,798

### Chart 2: FY22 Revenue Unaudited (pie chart)

Source	Revenue	Percentage
Permanent Fund	\$14,647,076	78%
Land Income	\$467,081	2%
State Appropriations	\$1,572,500	8%
State Sources	\$1,435,380	8%
Other	\$131,535	1%
Donations	\$135,055	1%
Federal Sources	\$328,121	2%
Local Sources	\$48,081	0%
Interest income	\$3,059	0%

### Chart 3: FY22 Expenditures Unaudited (pie chart)

Source	Revenue	Percentage
Salaries & Benefits	\$15,122,401.00	84%
Other	\$1,356,191.00	8%
Contracted Srvcs	\$824,041.00	5%
Supplies	\$411,621.00	2%
Travel	\$192,184.00	1%

## PAGE 5

# Demographics ~ School Year 2021-2022

### Birth-to-Three Program

- 601 children were screened
- 921 new referrals (111 added to caseloads)
- 620 children directly served on caseloads

### Early Childhood Program (ECP/Albuquerque Campus)

- 72 students were enrolled during the school year.
- School districts included: Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and Moriarty.

**Residential Campus (Alamogordo Campus)**

- 43 students were enrolled during the school year.
- 18 of these students, grades Prek-high school, received additional itinerant services as part of inclusion in Alamogordo Public Schools.

**Outreach Department**

- Completed 17 Functional Vision Evaluations/Learning Media Assessments for districts without their own TSVI
- Mentored 7 interns in 4 districts plus one charter school and NMSBVI
- Direct services to 20 students in 6 districts and 1 charter school
- 32 Low Vision Evaluations at 5 clinics around the state
- Virtual Learning Circle trainings for the SW, SE, and North regions of NM; 37 attendees

**Assistive Technology (AT) Lending Library**

- Loaned 38 devices from the Lending Library to students, and another 54 devices to staff for trainings
- Direct services to 11 students; indirect services to 36 (not including evaluations)
- Conducted 28 AT evaluations
- Provided 36 AT trainings
- Served 27 districts

**Vision Impairment Program (NMSU Personnel Prep)**

- 28 students enrolled in classes; 12 prospective TSVIs, 12 prospective COMS, 2 dual certification, 2 non-licensure pathway
- 6 TSVIs completed coursework
- 10 prospective COMS working on internship requirements

**Instructional Resource Center (IRC)**

- Loaned 45 APH Assistive Technology devices in conjunction with NMSBVI AT Lending Library
- 2,672 APH items were checked out; 1,691 were consumables
- Provided materials to 34 school districts in New Mexico
- 100% of NM school districts registered with NMVICount Statewide database

**515,905 total miles driven**

**Students Served: approximately 1,650 + 600 Screenings**

**2,600+ vision-related adapted materials provided to New Mexico Students**

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# Statewide Vision Diagnoses

Diagnosis	Percentage
Albinism	2%
Anophthalmia/Microphthalmia/Enucleation	2%
Anterior Defect	8%
Leber's Congenital Amaurosis	1%
Neurological Visual Impairment (CVI)	52%
Ocular Motor	7%
Optic Nerve Atrophy (ONA)	5%
Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH or SOD)	10%
Other	3%
Retinal Defect	6%
Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)	3%

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## County Map

### Students Served Across New Mexico in School Year 2021-2022

Student number range:	Counties
1-9 students	Taos, Colfax, Mora, Los Alamos, Guadalupe, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Sierra, Hidalgo
10-30 students	Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Torrance, Valencia, Cibola, Socorro, Curry, Grant, Luna, Lea
35-70 students	McKinley, Santa Fe, Otero, Chaves, Eddy
140-200 students	San Juan, Sandoval, Dona Ana
600+ students	Bernalillo

Teaching students who are visually impaired is not very complicated, but it is not intuitive, either. Students who are blind or have low vision (visually impaired), whose visual impairment is significant enough to adversely affect their education, require specialized instruction from professionals trained in understanding the impact visual impairment has on learning and development. At the foundation of teaching students with visual impairments is addressing skills and concepts that are typically learned through incidental learning, or by observation and visual access. In the presence of a visual impairment, incidental learning is either incomplete or nonexistent, resulting in the need of specialized instructional strategies and direct teaching through repeated, hands-on learning experiences. The skills our students need to reach their independent potential are often not adequately addressed through instruction and material adaptations in the general education curriculum, alone. These additional skills are referred to as the Expanded Core Curriculum (Allman & Lewis, 2014).

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is a disability-specific curriculum for children who are blind or visually impaired and is addressed at all ages. The ECC includes skills that are critical to a student's ability to access and participate in the core curriculum (math, language arts, science, social studies, etc.), interact with peers, and ultimately participate in their community and workplace as an adult. The nine areas of the ECC are:

- **Compensatory Access:** concept development and skills to access learning environment, including literacy and communication.
- **Orientation & Mobility:** knowing how to orient and travel safely, efficiently, and independently.
- **Social Interaction Skills:** to actively and appropriately participate in social situations, including verbal and nonverbal social skills, relationships, and social competence.
- **Independently Living Skills:** to care for oneself, completing tasks and functions for living, managing, and maintaining daily life (eating, dressing, hygiene, time management).
- **Recreation & Leisure Skills:** developing skills and interest in physical and leisure activities for choosing how to spend free time.
- **Career Education:** knowledge, behaviors, and skills to prepare students for work and careers.
- **Assistive Technology:** using electronic equipment and blindness-specific devices to access electronic information, print, and computers.
- **Sensory Efficiency:** learning to use all their senses to access environments and information, including functional vision.
- **Self-Determination:** empowering the student to believe in oneself, advocate for themselves, and meet their goals.

Our school employs many innovative teaching techniques to address the unique needs of our student population. With the return of in-person learning, we implemented even more new strategies. In everything we do, our goal is to empower our students toward their highest level of independence so that they may become integral, productive members of their communities.

*{Photo Captions:*

- *Angie Espinoza smiles as she holds on to the edge of the swimming pool.*
- *Melisa Inzunza-Alvarez works on making a wood pen in the woodshop*
- *Melisa Inzunza-Alvarez uses a Visiobook to read.*



- *Two preschool students sit on the floor dropping plastic coins into a piggy bank.*
- *Hector Armenta-Marrufo feels the bark of an aspen tree during a hike.*
- *An Educational Assistant watches Ethyn Martinez using a Braille writer in the Life Skills classroom.*
- *An O&M accompanies a student as she crosses the street.*
- *Savannah Dixon independently measures detergent and loads the washing machine.*
- *A preschool student uses a red pen to draw a picture on paper.}*

## PAGE 7

# Student Achievement Data

\*All charts are bar graphs with blue bars; Y-axis is marked 0%, 50%, and 100%. Each program has goals and reported percentage of students who met that goal.

### Birth to 3 Program:

**Goals:** 80% will show progress using the Compensatory section of the Oregon Project Skills Inventory and 80% will make progress using the Birth to 6 O&M Inventory.

- B-3 Compensatory Goal: 98%
- B-3 O&M Goal: 87%

### Residential Campus: ISP/Preschool Student Progress\*

**Goals:** Students will demonstrate growth in literacy and math goals, communication matrix, and 7/9 ECC areas.

\*moving from no skill to emerging or emerging to mastery on Matrix in 2 domains; ECC: increasing independence in 1+ skill in area

- Literacy: 69%
- Math: 61%
- Comm Matrix: 100%
- 7/9 ECC Areas: 71%

### Early Childhood Program:

**Goal:** All ECP students will meet 90% of their goals.

#### Result:

- 89% of ECP Students met 75% or more of their goals;
- 69% met literacy/math goals;
- 73% met other classroom goals such as social and braille goals.

### Student Progress\* Across Domains:

\*maintained or increased growth from last year.

- Cognitive: 73%
- Language: 54%
- Comm Matrix: 23%

- Compensatory: 53%
- Vision: 63%
- Self Help: 61%
- Social: 63%
- Fine Motor: 65%
- Gross Motor: 65%

#### Residential Campus: Related Services

**Goal:** The Related service team will meet 70% of their student IEP objectives.

- PT: 71%
- OT: 62%
- O&M: 72%

#### Residential Campus: Academic Program

**Goal:** Students earning an A, B, or C in subject area

- Math: 70%
- ELA: 100%
- Science: 69%
- Braille: 100%
- Asst. Tech: 93%

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*PAGE 8*

## Program Updates

### Birth to Three (B-3) Program

*(Julie Maner, Program Coordinator)*

Our B-3 Program works as part of early intervention teams providing vision and O&M support to families all across the state. Early intervention services were provided in-person for home and community visits. Telehealth remains an option for families and teams, allowing more flexibility.

#### Staff & Services Provided

- 20 staff consisting of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs), Developmental Vision Specialists, Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS), and one Administrative Assistant
- continued partnership with Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and Family Infant

& Toddler (FIT) Division to provide early intervention services

- provided trainings to various early Intervention agencies around the state, as well as professional organizations, providers, and new NMSBVI staff
- worked with hospitals and early intervention agencies to provide early vision screenings
- provided in-person and telehealth home and community visits; partnered with Explora! and Santa Fe Children's Museums for free access with families during outings and lessons
- offered consultation in doctor visits, team meetings, trainings, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and transition from early intervention (Part C) to school age (Part B)
- mentored students in NMSU's Visual Impairment Program and O&M program

### **Professional Presentations**

- Early Intervention Services for O&M (Sharing O&M strategies and techniques from our COMS)
  - Western Regional Early Intervention Conference/Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired
- The International Online Orientation & Mobility Symposium Conference
  - University of Pittsburgh Graduate O&M Program
  - NMSBVI's Innovations Fair
- Implementation of the CVI Companion Guide (Sharing our experiences and lessons learned related to CVI and the CVI Companion Guide research)
  - Pediatric CVI Conference
  - Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference
  - San Francisco State University (CVI and our use of the CVI Companion Guide)

**620 = Children Served Statewide**

**284 = Average Ongoing Caseloads**

**77 = Average Monthly Referrals**

*{Photo Captions:*

- *A preschool student smiles as she swings with her white cane resting in front of her.*
- *A toddler uses a PVC stander to support himself during an outreach visit.*
- *A toddler stands independently with his white cane while exploring the outdoors.}*

**PAGE 9**

## **Early Childhood Program (ECP)**

***(Paul Kilman, Program Coordinator)***

The Albuquerque ECP campus continues to grow. 72 students were enrolled in 10 classrooms during the school year and more are anticipated next year. Students attended in-person with some students served

virtually or through homebound services.

### **Transdisciplinary Approach**

- held monthly planning meetings between teachers, educational assistants, and therapists
- teams collaborated to map students' progress and plan next steps
- designed programming to create hands-on experiences to address developmental and ECC needs for all students

### **Projects & Collaborations**

- implemented single-case design studies to investigate implementation of teaching intentional communication and handwriting curriculum
- integrated the CVI Profile into our Functional Visual Evaluation (FVE) template (providing more robust reports and recommendations for instruction and programming)
- searched for opportunities to gather data, improve best practices, and share with other professionals
- UNM and NMSU students returned to campus for tours and internships
- Worked with B-3 to form study group to discuss strategies related to CVI and the CVI Companion Guide resource

### **Professional Presentations: AERBVI International Conference**

- Presented preliminary data from intentional communication intervention study
- Presented results and implications from Handwriting Curriculum study

## **ECP Family Nights**

*(Claudia Randolph, ECP social worker)*

These events give parents an opportunity to meet and support each other, as well as for extended family to participate. These events are also centered around providing students an opportunity to engage in new activities, with new people, in a familiar environment.

- Fall Carnival: 13 families and a total of 33 guests attended
  - activities included multi-sensory play, arts and crafts, dancing, and many take-home prizes.
- Spring Egg Hunt: almost 100 attendees (21 families), plus "Orbit" from the Albuquerque Isotopes!
  - used beeping eggs so students could find them by sound; some had balloons so they were more accessible

*{Photo Captions:*

- *An overhead view of a preschool student's fingers on the keys of a Braille writer.*
- *A young student touches a raised letter "g" in the word "go" on a vertical letter board.}*

# Preschool: Residential Campus

*(Jackie Freeman, Program Coordinator)*

NMSBVI Residential Campus Preschool provides programming for students with visual impairments who need more direct instruction and ECC support to help them prepare for kindergarten. Related services are provided in a push-in model so staff can reinforce strategies throughout the week.

## **Educational Programming**

- play-based learning activities and introducing school-readiness skills
- targeted development of communication, gross, and fine motor skills
- taught literacy/braille readiness and math concepts, and assistive technology
- weekly activities in music, physical education, and recreation activities
- tactile and multi-sensory experiences through classroom, campus, and community-based learning and programs

*{Photo Caption: An education assistant sits behind Jordyn Graff and encourages her to stack plastic cups.}*

## **PAGE 10**

# Residential Campus Academic Program

*(Maritza Morales, Principal)*

NMSBVI uses many innovative teaching techniques to address the core curriculum needs from elementary through grade 12.

## **Elementary Class**

- addressed reading, writing, and math curricula in students' learning media (i.e. print/braille/both)
- weekly themes focused on early career readiness development, role-playing, social/emotional development, and compensatory skills to increase independence

## **Collaborative Planning**

- creation of cross-curricular educational programs and activities for secondary students
- integration of core curriculum with post-secondary employment and independent living goals/programming
- collaboration between Transition Coordinator, Life Skills staff, and Assistive Technology instructor to support career, independent living, and post-secondary goals.

## **Assistive Technology**

- continued use of Teams within classroom instruction to reinforce students' assistive technology and technology skills
- direct instruction in Assistive Technology to teach skills, devices, and concepts students need to

access classroom and public-school curricula

### **Mathematics**

- UNM-PNM Math Contest—a Freshman student competed in this statewide high school mathematics competition
- NMSBVI Math Curriculum Adoption Presentation — math and elementary teachers presented the new recommended math curricula to families, staff, and stakeholders

*{Photo Captions:*

- *Ariella Lopez explores the “Welcome Back” bulletin board in the WEC lobby on the first day of school.*
- *Mario Salinas looks closely at a glass measuring cup filled with water.*}

## **Intensive Support Classes (ISP)**

***(Jackie Freeman, Program Coordinator)***

NMSBVI Intensive Support Program (ISP) provides differentiated instruction for students with multiple impairments, including visual impairment, in all grades. Programming focuses on functional academics, communication, fine and gross motor skills, and the ECC.

### **Educational Programming**

- provided inclusion opportunities in the public school, as appropriate, to generalize skills and participate in the community
- hands-on, multi-sensory activities focused around themes such as, friendship, “What’s unique about me?”, safety, plant life, and recipes
- music and adapted P.E. classes provided theme-related auditory and kinesthetic input to reinforce and help generalize new skills and concepts from classroom instruction
- community-based learning highlights: trip to the mountains to learn about camping (pitching a tent, building a fire, and exploring nature), a visit from Runyan Ranch provided tactile learning with their assortment of domestic and exotic animals, and a visit from Explora! Museum presented STEAM activities

*{Photo Caption: A seated boy holds the end of a jump rope while his P.E. teacher holds the other end.}*

## **PAGE 11**

## **Life Skills Program**

***(Jackie Freeman, Program Coordinator)***

Life Skills is a robust program for residential, day, and short-term students ages 14 and older, focused on

teaching and practicing skills necessary for the transition to adult life. Programming is designed around incorporating the 9 areas of the ECC, as well as the 16 career clusters (such as agriculture/food, finance, STEAM, business, manufacturing, and health sciences).

### **Educational Programming**

- career preparation focused on developing resumes, job preparation, and mock interviews, with feedback through the year
- some students worked at on-campus or off-campus jobs for experience and job coaching to encourage success and independence
- 3 students completed long-term rotations in apartment living to practice and refine their independent living skills
- completed woodworking projects from start-to-finish: product design, material choice, cutting and sanding with power tools, and assembly (students chose a piece to sell at a live fundraising auction to help students see the value in their creations.)
- grew plants in the greenhouse to sell on campus and share at home in the greenhouse: students planted, transplanted, and nurtured plants into a product
- students made pillow beds in sewing, learning machine and hand-sewing
- one NMSBVI student participated in our Post-Secondary Program, which is open to NM students with complete high school credits who want to develop and practice independent living, employment, community access, and college-success skills

*{Photo Captions:*

- *An O&M Instructor watches as a high school student uses self-checkout at Wal Mart.*
- *A Life Skills teacher laughs as a student wearing eye-covering makes a dessert.*
- *Prom King Angel Sanchez, Queen Carmen Jimenez, Prince Hector Armenta-Marrufo & Princess Aydin Begay}*

## **Residential Life**

***(Jackie Freeman, Program Coordinator)***

Residential Life is an integral part of NMSBVI programming for students grades 3-12, as most students live on campus during the school week.

### **Before and After School Programming**

- campus dorms provided a safe, calm setting for after-school activities
- offered homework support for students needing extra help
- Residential Life staff collaborated with Life Skills instructor to target ECC skills based on individual student needs
- apartment/cottage instruction to prepare students for life after high school

### **Recreation & Leisure**

- students participated in bowling at our on-campus alley, riding bikes, pottery, crafts, games, and

various community-based learning experiences

- billiards tournament fostered student-staff relationships
- held Prom for secondary students

## PAGE 12

### Summer Camp

*(Ron Later, Summer Camp Coordinator)*

#### **ECP Campus – Albuquerque – for enrolled ECP students**

- 2 one-week camps hosted 10 students each week in 2 classrooms
- themed activities related to rainbows and color included color-mixing, tie-dye, and pool play
- indoor activities included cooking, cleaning dishes, and laundry

#### **Residential Campus – Alamogordo – open to all NM students**

- week-long elementary camp activities reinforced skills in braille, reading, writing, and math
- elementary afternoons included outdoor fitness activities such as walking the Braille Trail (a NMSBVI/US Forest Service collaboration from several years ago)
- secondary camp included math, technology, and living skills (which local TSVIs reported as areas for extra practice)
- secondary afternoon activities were fitness-centered including Blind Soccer (tables used as field barriers, guides and players were trained in specific techniques, then staff and students scrimmaged)
- White Sands National Park hosted a hands-on presentation by an evolutionary biologist on the unique ecosystem hidden in the area
- New Mexico Museum of Space History hosted a NASA employee who is blind, who shared his personal story, then NMMSH staff talked to elementary and secondary students about planets and helped them make “stomp rockets”

#### **Farmington Area Satellite Camp – Farmington**

- 8 students attended from Farmington, Aztec, Bloomfield, and Shiprock region
- goal was to provide variety of ECC instruction to students in the area
- activities included math, technology, fitness, O&M, and living skills such as deciding on meals, shopping for, and making lunch/snacks

*{Photo Captions:*

- *An educator holds a young student’s hand as he walks on multi-colored balancing blocks.*
- *Angel Sanchez and Carmen Jimenez read and feel a sign on the Braille Trail.}*



# Transition Programming

**(Holly Bird, Transition Coordinator)**

NMSBVI's Transition programming focuses on preparing students for transition from school life to adult life. This year, we started incorporating career exploration into the younger grades on campus.

Formal Transition Services

- begin when student turns 14 (continues to graduation)
- focused planning with the student identifies strengths, needs, and interests to develop their own transition plan, action plans to meet goals, and work independently toward their goals

**Partnership with NM Commission for the Blind for Pre-ETS Initiatives:**

- Project Echo
  - helped NM youths participate in a national organization teaching entrepreneurship skills, culminating in a year-end "Shark Tank" style presentation
  - two statewide students presented a business proposal to train dog guides for the blind
  - "Guiding Paws for YOUths" won the \$2,000 overall team prize
  - connections with the national organizations will continue to support the winners
  - NMSBVI plans to be a resource to other students who wish to compete in the future
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) Summer Camp
  - 3-week summer camp focused on repeated experiences and clear routines to develop work-readiness skills
  - use of work systems to promote independence
  - students stayed in NMSBVI dorms, enhancing independence and daily living skills

*{Photo Caption: Mary Nix independently navigates her way to the bus after class at Alamogordo High School.}*

**PAGE 13**

## Outreach Department

**(Julie Johnson, Outreach Program Coordinator)**

NMSBVI Outreach Department conducts Functional Vision Evaluations and Learning Media Assessments for districts without a TSVI, and partner with some districts to provide direct services. Outreach staff also mentor NMSU TSVI interns.

The Access to Learning Low Vision Clinic (LVC) and Assistive Technology Lending Library are also part of Outreach.

**Outreach Programming**

- 10 staff worked to reach every area across the state
- consulted on functional vision evaluations to districts requesting assistance
- “Virtual Learning Circles” were available to any TSVI for free professional development and collaboration
- served as appointed mentors to NMSU-VIP interns while they work with students in their home school district; mentored 7 interns from districts and both NMSBVI campuses

### **Low Vision Clinics**

#### ***(Margaret Hidalgo, LVC Coordinator)***

- low vision evaluations provided detailed reports of doctor’s findings and recommendations for low vision device/glasses prescriptions
- collaborated with students’ TSVIs, O&Ms, and parents
- provided post-clinic meetings with NMSBVI Assistive Technology specialists for additional input and recommendations
- Low Vision Clinic Coordinator and TSVIs provide follow-up training on the low vision device
- state-wide clinics included Roswell Independent Schools, Clovis Municipal Schools, Hobbs Municipal Schools, Deming Public Schools, Silver Consolidated Schools, Gadsden Independent Schools, New Mexico School for the Deaf, NMSBVI, Rehoboth Christian Schools, Portales Municipal, Corrales International School, Lovington Municipal Schools, and Alamogordo Public Schools

### **Assistive Technology Lending Library**

#### ***(Fatima Portugal, Assistive Technology Specialist)***

- provided formal and informal evaluation services to school districts, TSVIs, and Low Vision Clinic
- collaborated on functional vision evaluations with other Outreach staff for assistive technology recommendations
- provided consult and direct service to TSVIs and students to learn or troubleshoot a specific device
- worked directly with students’ teams (parents, TSVIs, classroom teachers, school technology specialists, related service providers, special education coordinators, etc.) to identify appropriate assistive technology devices, software options, and applications.
- used switch-use, head-tracking, and eye-gaze technology to expand communication and access for students.

***“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing....” ~ Helen Keller***

*{Photo Captions:*

- *A prospective VI teacher watches a demonstration in the science lab.*
- *An ophthalmologist tests a young man during a Low Vision Clinic.*
- *An adult holds a vision measuring device for a young girl at a Low Vision Clinic.}*

## Personnel Prep – NMSU’s Visual Impairment Program (VIP)

*(Loana Mason, Ed.D, COMS, VIP Program Coordinator)*

NMSBVI partners with NMSU for the Visual Impairment Program (VIP), which is the personnel prep program training teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) in New Mexico.

- 28 students enrolled in classes; 12 prospective TSVIs and 12 prospective COMS, 2 seeking dual-licensure, and 2 pursuing VI Focus/non-licensure option
- interns were placed at NMSBVI and 8 public school districts, as well as 10 COMS serving various districts
- 4 students completed TSVI licensure coursework and 1 completed their VI Focus coursework
- NMSU VIP attained national accreditation through the Counsel for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- co-authored article titled, “A Critical Analysis of Inclusivity in Fictional Children’s Literature Featuring Characters with Visual Impairment,” and published in the Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness Education Quarterly

*{Photo Caption: A prospective VI teacher in the Personnel Prep program wears eye-covering and uses a white cane to cross the street with her supervisor.}*

## Instructional Resource Center (NM-IRC)

*(Mary Vaughn, Program Coordinator)*

The NMSBVI Instructional Resource Center (NM-IRC) continues to be the central lending library, distributor of American Printing House for the Blind (APH) materials, and source for braille transcription needs for all school districts in New Mexico. Students who qualify for APH and supplemental materials through NM-IRC are registered and managed through NMVICount, a statewide online database. NM-IRC materials can be ordered through this website.

- 4 braille transcribers produced braille textbooks, tactile graphics, and other requested materials at no cost to school districts
- Federal Quota Fund program restocked our shelves with favorite and new educational materials from APH
- NM-IRC partnered with NMSBVI’s Assistive Technology Lending Library to loan assistive technology items offered by APH through Quota Funds
- conducted school district trainings on various APH items

**~50,000+ braille pages produced and 1,900+ tactile graphics last year!**

*{Photo Captions:*

- *A woman demonstrates some of the adaptive equipment available in the Instructional Resource Center.*
- *Hae’Leigh Miller laughs as she uses a Braille writer.*

- *A student uses her finger to read Braille.*
  - *Mary Nix smiles at her Braille instructor while reading Braille with her fingertips.*
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## PAGE 15

# Research Projects

**Implementation of CVI Companion Guide:** participating in research with authors of the CVI Companion Guide (APH, 2022) through LaSalle University, to improve training and implementation strategies for students with CVI. NMSBVI staff have co-presented with authors to share our experiences and preliminary findings.

**Validation of Birth-6 O&M Skills Inventory:** NMSBVI B-3 program worked with Western Michigan University researchers the past few years investigating the validity and reliability of NMSBVI's original Birth to Six Orientation and Mobility Skills Inventory (B6OMSI). B-3 staff collected data and analysis completed this past year deemed it valid and reliable; the B6OMSI-research edition is the first and only valid and reliable assessment tool for this population.

**Implementation of a Handwriting Curriculum for Preschool Children who are Blind/Visually Impaired:** NMSBVI-ECP conducted a single case intervention study with faculty from the University of Nebraska to investigate the use of Learning Without Tears handwriting curriculum for preschool students with visual impairments. Students who showed the most gains were low vision students with no additional disabilities; one student who is a braille learner showed increased stamina for coloring and began writing his initials as a beginning signature.

**12 National presentations/webinars by NMSBVI staff during 21-22!**

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## PAGE 16

# Construction on the Alamogordo Campus

*(Margie Macias, Director of Institutional Support Services)*

Current and future projects seek capital outlay funding for both NMSBVI campuses through partnership with the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) and the Higher Education Department (HED).

**Garrett Dormitory**

- demolition of the previous Garrett Dormitory occurred in October 2021
- replaces an older structure named in memory of former teacher and Regent, Elizabeth Garrett (1885-1947), who became blind in childhood
- Garrett was the daughter of famed sheriff Pat Garrett, a friend of Helen Keller, lifelong advocate for the blind, and talented musician renowned for writing New Mexico's official state song, "O Fair New Mexico" as well as NMSBVI's official school song
- the new dorm represents educational housing and opportunities to develop independent living skills, two benefits in which Garrett strongly believed

#### **Paul & Lois Tapia Building (built 1918)**

- one of 4 buildings designated a historic landmark on the National and State Historical Record
- currently in final design phases for upcoming renovations
- collaboration with NM Historical Preservation Department for refurbishment or replacement of the windows (preserves history, improves efficiency and security)

#### **Residential Cottage**

- provides a setting for secondary students to practice independent living skills
- if passed this November, General Obligation (GO) Bond 3 will fund this project
- project is fully designed and "shovel ready" (may start July 2023)

*{Photo Captions:*

- *Superintendent Patricia Beecher wears a hard hat at the construction site of Garrett Dorm.*
- *The Garrett Dormitory building before bricks were placed.*
- *A more completed photo of the Garrett Dormitory nearing completion}*

**PAGE 16**

## **Events and Clubs**

#### **Braille Challenge**

***(Julie Johnson, Outreach Program Coordinator)***

Challenge is a national competition that motivates students to practice and hone their braille literacy skills, which are essential to academic and employment success.

- held annually January through March across U.S. and Canada
- open to any NM student who is learning or using braille as their reading media
- 2 Regional Braille Challenge events were held in 2022 (Albuquerque and Alamogordo)
- 10 students participated, one qualified for nationals!

*{Photo Captions:*

- *Three students post for a picture with their white canes and certificates that read, "Master of the Dot".*

- *Students at the Alamogordo Campus participating in the Braille Challenge competition pose with their white canes outside the WEC building.*

### **Innovations Fair**

***(Kitty Edstrand, ID&R Coordinator)***

- Staff presented new and creative projects or practices during this live virtual event
- 80% staff attendance as well as NM State Land Commissioner, Stephanie Garcia Richards
- recorded presentations on our YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/nmsbvi](http://www.youtube.com/nmsbvi))

### **Parent Braille Class**

***(Laura Miyoshi & Kitty Edstrand)***

- offered new braille course to parents of NMSBVI students
- covered literacy code, experience with a braille writer, and led to better understanding of their students' reading media
- 12 parents initially participated and a few continued throughout the year

### **ECC Skill Booster Saturdays**

***(Mary Vaughn, Julie Johnson, Kitty Edstrand)***

- new program to introduce specific Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) skills to non-NMSBVI students from around the state who may be homeschooled, or enrolled in a charter/public/private school in their local school district
- April event in Albuquerque focused on social and recreation and leisure skills (games, making snacks, and a nature walk at Rio Grande Nature Center)
- Future events to be held around the state

*{Photo Captions:*

- *During an ECC Skill Booster weekend, the Athletic Director stands behind Briana Sanches to show her how to hold a bat and hit the ball.*
- *A young girl crouches and uses her white cane to locate the edge of a riverbank on a nature hike.*

## **PAGE 17**

### **Spaceport America Open House & NMSU Visit**

- students experienced hands-on activities and learned from Spaceport America staff
- students visited NMSU campus while in Las Cruces

*{Photo Caption: A young man on a field trip holds his white cane and smiles as he feels the texture of an Astronaut's space suit.}*

### **Girl Scouts**

***(Lori Adam, Occupational Therapist)***

- met weekly
- sold cookies throughout the community; voted to use cookie sales to participate in a day or overnight trip to a destination in NM
- participated with other local troops in the Christmas Parade, World Thinking Day, Trunk or Treat, and an overnight camp

- each girl completed a “journey.” A multi-season project to investigate their interests and use skills gained to make a difference in the community
- Brownies collected items to donate to “Kitty City,” a local cat rescue
- Juniors collected items to help families affected by the Ruidoso fire and donated volunteer work to help a friend attend camp.
- Cadettes prepared presentations about bullying and how to stop it

*{Photo Caption: The Girl Scout Leader assists Mersedies Sisneros as she steps into a tent.}*

### **Public Speaking Club**

***(Donelle Bunch, ELA Teacher/TSVI)***

- partnered with National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA)
- focused on public speaking, presentation, and performing arts skills
- NSDA competitions were online (mostly during travel time) so some students competed from the bus
- added benefits of teamwork, responsibility, self-advocacy, and commitment

*{Photo Caption: Several students at the Alamogordo campus sit at tables with reading materials in front of them during Braille class.}*

### **Adaptive Ski Program**

***(Lori Adam, Occupational Therapist)***

- partnered with Ski Apache Adaptive Sports (SAAS)
- students experienced recreational snow sports with instructors trained in adaptive ski techniques and individual lessons
- ISP, elementary, and high school students all participated

*{Photo Caption:*

- An adaptive ski coach skis alongside a student at Ski Apache.*
- Cianna Guillen accepts a certificate from her adaptive ski coach.}*

### **White Cane Safety Day Celebrations 2021**

- the Alamogordo Campus and Commission for the Blind celebrated with a White Cane Walk around campus, student speeches, and snacks
- the ECP Campus celebrated with a campus parade, cane decorating, and obstacle course

*{Photo Caption: Mary Nix and Faith Switzer are captured in a screenshot during virtual learning.}*

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**PAGE 18**

## **Partnerships and Grants**

### **Community Partnerships & Collaborations**

NMSBVI continues to work with other organizations and partners in NM, nationally, and even

internationally to serve our students and mission. Several collaborative projects were initiated or continued through the 2021-2022 school year, as well as continued funding support from community partners, donors, and other state programs, such as:

- The Navajo Nation, who funds two developmental vision specialists
- The Land Grant Permanent Fund and NM Land Office for operational dollars, and
- the current state legislatures for operational dollars and capital projects

Working towards our mission and serving students throughout the state would not be possible without this support.

**New Mexico Commission for the Blind:** NMSBVI and the Commission partner for various transition programming, statewide training, and NMSU internship opportunities.

**National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico:** NMSBVI presents at the annual conference on the state of the school and we work in partnership with NFB to support our shared communities.

**UNM and Naked Heart Foundation:** The SLP/ILT for the ECP continued to work with the Naked Heart Foundation and UNM to consult with the rehabilitation hospital in Tula, Russia. This work focuses on providing evidenced based practices for children with cerebral palsy and the impact of visual impairments on early communication.

## Grants

**Non-Accidental Trauma Prevention Grant (CYFD Children's Trust Fund):** NMSBVI's Birth-3 team received funding to support NMSBVI's ongoing Handle with Care Campaign. Over 1,400 rack cards/brochures and 151 magnets were distributed and will continue to be given through statewide trainings and local agencies/partners serving children and families.

**Lineberry Foundation Grant:** Their generous funding provides support to our Low Vision Clinics and Assistive Technology Lending Library for materials, contracts, and travel.

**Nusenda Community Rewards:** Provided funding to purchase 10 iPads at each campus for NMSBVI's Assistive Technology Program. ECP students get early experiences and access to iPad accessibility features, and residential campus students have more access options and personalized settings.

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## NMSBVI Foundation

The NMSBVI Foundation provides supplementary funding for the many student programs, projects, equipment, and services that NMSBVI provides. This year, the Foundation continued its efforts to



fundraise for NMSBVI through their Albuquerque Night Golf Tournament in September 2021 that raised over \$20,000! The Foundation welcomed three new board members this year.

*{Photo Captions:*

- An NMSBVI Foundation member and his son prepare goodie bags for participants in the Night Golf Fundraiser in Albuquerque.*
- A participant in the Night Golf Fundraiser in Albuquerque putts a glowing golf ball toward a glowstick lighting the location of the cup.}*

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**PAGE 19**

## **Saying Goodbye**

### **CONGRATULATIONS to All of Our 2022 Graduates!**

- 4 High School Graduates**
- 22 Preschool Graduates**

*{Branding graphic from this year's graduating class: white roses on a rough-looking textural background of green, blue, and purple; headline reads, "Never Give Up! NMSBVI Graduation 2022"}*

### **NMSBVI Staff Retirements**

**Thank you for your many years of service!**

- Mark Carter ~ O&M Instructor, VIP Adjunct Faculty and Statewide Training Coordinator; 2/1/1993 to 6/30/2022
- Teri DeLeon ~ Cook; 5/17/05 to 5/31/22
- Brenda Hunt ~ Registered Nurse; 8/13/1998 to 12/31/2021
- Kris Malett ~ Education Assistant; 8/9/95 to 6/30/22
- Michael Peralta ~ Custodian - ECP; 5/13/13 to 6/3/22
- Cheryl Petree ~ Outreach, Itinerant; Assistive Technology Specialist; 8/15/11 to 6/30/22
- Lesa Richardson ~ Records Management Specialist; 7/18/05 to 6/30/22
- Bill Shields ~ Maintenance Technician, 9/20/12 to 12/31/21
- Virginia Stephenson ~ Instructor; 8/7/08 to 6/30/22

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## Thank You!

*NMSBVI extends the sincerest of gratitude to all of our staff, students, families, and supporters!*

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*{Graphic for Albuquerque Journal's Top Workplaces, 2017-2022}*

## NMSBVI is a Top Workplace Again... 6 YEARS IN A ROW!

This year, we are once again proud recipients of an Albuquerque Journal Top Workplaces 2022 award, for the 6th year in a row! This award is based on employee responses to a third-party workplace survey. We placed #2 in the midsize workplace category. Many thanks to the staff who completed the survey, as well as the students and families that make NMSBVI such a great place to work! It is our continuing honor to serve students across the state of New Mexico!

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### BACK COVER

To request a copy of this publication in Braille, please contact Sharon Hilton, NMSBVI Braille Production Department: email [SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)

**New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired  
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