



The Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior has a new brochure titled *Positive Solutions for Families* now available online. This 4-page brochure provides parents with eight practical tips they can use when their young children exhibit challenging behavior. Each tip includes a brief explanation and an example to show parents how they might use the specific approach with their own family in everyday life.

To view or download this FREE brochure, please visit <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/resources.html>.

Indiana Deafblind Services Project  
Deafblind Focus  
Vol. 18, No. 1

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This publication is made available by the Indiana Deafblind Services Project, through the Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education, located at Indiana State University, with support from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs under cooperative agreement #H326C030041 and the Indiana Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of either the U.S. Department of Education or the Indiana Department of Education and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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PAID  
Permit No. 48  
Terre Haute, IN

# Deafblind Focus

Volume 18 No. 1

Winter 2007

## CARLOS TAYLOR SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

My name is Carlos Taylor and I am the Adaptive Computer Technology Specialist at Ball State University. As of this writing, I have been in this position for nearly three years. My responsibilities include overseeing the assistive technology available for students with disabilities, keeping abreast of new and emerging products and trends, and deciding what products or services should be obtained that will meet the needs of our students. I also work with students to ensure they know how to use the technology available to them. However, my job responsibilities don't stop there. In addition to my responsibilities to students, I also assist Ball State staff and faculty members if the need arises for them to use assistive technology. I also oversee the production of alternative media. Students with print disabilities such as visual impairments, learning disabilities, or mobility impairments that prevent them from accessing print text books come to me for accommodations. Those accommodations include the conversion of material into braille, converting an image into a tactile graphic, large print, or converting an inaccessible file into one that is more accessible. Perhaps the thing that keeps us the busiest, especially at the beginning of a new semester, is our book scanning service. Students drop off their text books and we scan them and convert the scanned images into a format that is best suited for each individual student. Those formats include Kurzweil, Microsoft Word, PDF, and more. We even receive occasional requests to convert books into MP3 files which are audio files that can be played on a computer or portable listening device such as an iPod.

I enjoy my job immensely. Not only do I get to see and work with some of the latest assistive technology, but I get to work with people and help them receive the maximum benefits technology has to offer. I especially enjoy working with new

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## KATIE'S COLLEGE JOURNEY BEGINS

The following article was written by  
Linda Lechner, a parent from Indiana.



My daughter, Katie (shown left), was diagnosed at the age of 9 with Usher Syndrome I. So not only is she profoundly deaf but she is losing her sight to Retinitis Pigmentosa.

Katie attended the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis and graduated this past May. She applied to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester, New York and was accepted about a month later. She spent a week at the NTID Explore Your Future program and loved the college and made up her mind that week. She chose Art and Imagine/Digital Imaging Publishing Technology as her major.

In August 2006, we made the 12 hour drive to New York. She was so excited and I was just dealing with a lot of fears. We raise our children to be independent but sending them that far away with not only being deaf but also knowing she is losing her sight made it very hard to let go. It helped knowing they

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## CARLOS TAYLOR SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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freshman who, often times, have never used some of the technology we have available to them. I also am reminded of how I was, not too long ago, in their shoes and how overwhelmed I felt with adjusting to life as a college student, learning to use the technology I needed to complete my course work, and growing comfortable navigating around campus as a blind student.

I grew up under the tender and loving guidance of my parents in South Bend, Indiana. When the time came for me to begin school, my parents enrolled me in a private school. I remained in private school through out pre-school, kindergarten, and first grade. When I was seven years old, I became blind from detached retinas. The private school did not have the proper tools and materials to teach me as a blind child. Therefore, my parents were faced with a decision. They could send me to Indianapolis to the Indiana School for the Blind or enroll me in the South Bend Community School system. They opted for the latter as they did not want to send me away from home.

Once I began attending public school, I was taught how to read and write in the braille system. My textbooks were provided in braille and on cassette tape from Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D). My teacher of the visually impaired, Janice Irvine, manually brailled out my worksheets and math problems. After learning to type in the fourth grade, I began typing the answers to my homework assignments on talking computers which were available to me both at school and at home. I also made use of a portable braille note taking device called a Pocket Braille. Once I reached middle school, Martha Court was my VI teacher and I made more use of computer technology. I only used a Perkins Brailier for math and foreign language classes. Everything else was typed on computers. I was also introduced to braille translation software which converted computer documents into braille files which were produced on a braille embosser in contracted braille. Additionally, I was introduced to optical scanning technology. I was amazed of how a sheet of paper could be read to me

by the computer or converted into braille and embossed in a matter of minutes.

While in middle school, I was asked to decide whether I wanted to go to college. This decision was necessary in order to select the classes I needed to take in high school. Since I had always heard that a college education enhanced one's opportunities for gainful employment and I saw older cousins leave home and attend college, I felt it was necessary for me to pursue higher education as well. Therefore, I took honors level classes in high school to prepare me for my post secondary educational experiences. I continued utilizing books on tape from RFB&D and books in braille while at the same time making full use of computer technology to complete assignments. I was given more experiences by my orientation and mobility (O&M) instructor such as catching buses, locating stores in malls and crossing busy downtown intersections.

As my high school years drew to an end, the reality of going away to college hit me. I needed to select a school and apply. I visited Indiana State University in Terre Haute, the University of Evansville, and Ball State University. I was hoping to major in telecommunications as I had a tremendous amount of experience with radio broadcasting in high school. I chose to apply to Ball State where I was accepted. I liked Ball State because it was far enough from South Bend for me to have the away from home experience, yet it wasn't too far away that I couldn't go home for a weekend. I also knew that Ball State's telecommunications department was highly ranked in the country. Additionally, I heard positive things about Ball State from cousins and friends of the family who preceded me in going away to college. Lastly, I heard of the excellent services Ball State offered for students with disabilities.

I began attending Ball State in August 1997. I kept hearing people say to freshmen to get involved. So that is what I did. I was on hall council in my residence hall, I played goal ball with other blind students, landed a job as a student lab assistant in the Adaptive Computer Technology Lab, and more. I was even the homecoming king of my residence hall. The success I had my first semester of college gave me the confidence to press forward and finish my degree.

After landing a job in the Adaptive Computer Technology Lab, I realized that my interest of

technology grew. Soon after, I concluded that a career in technology looked more promising than a career in radio broadcasting. Therefore, I changed my major from telecommunications to Business Information Technology. After completing my undergraduate degree, I went to New Jersey to get a Seeing Eye Dog.

After returning to Muncie with my new Seeing Eye dog, I began searching for employment. I told myself that if I didn't find employment by December of that year, I would apply for graduate school. Since I was unsuccessful at finding a job, I applied and was accepted into graduate school at Ball State where I studied Information and Communication Sciences where I began classes in January of 2003.

In the fall of 2003, the Adaptive Computer Technology Specialist was promoted which left the position vacant. I decided to apply. I was contacted for an interview and less than a week afterward, I was offered the position. I accepted and began working on October 17, 2003. Since I had already started graduate school, I figured that it would be best if I finished what I had already started. I took one class each semester until I completed all of my course work and graduated with my master of science degree in Information and Communication Sciences on December 18, 2005.

I relied mostly on assistive technology throughout college. I used a braille note taker to take notes in class. I used scanning technology to access handouts and textbooks. I tried using cassettes from RFB&D the first semester of my freshman year, however I found that either RFB&D didn't have the books I needed or they had an earlier edition than the one my class required. I also found that having my books on my computer made it easier to find various sections of the text I needed more efficiently.

The O&M skills I learned proved to be valuable as I learned my way around campus and went to and fro independently. I later learned the Muncie bus and cab systems and was able to go places off of the Ball State campus. The office of Disabled Student Development, under the direction of Richard Harris at the time, was very supportive and provided me with readers and human note takers in the highly visual courses I needed to take such as economics and mathematics. I will be forever grateful to the people who played a part in who I am and who I will become.

## KATIE'S COLLEGE JOURNEY BEGINS

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have a support group for the Usher Syndrome kids and they are very accommodating for her needs. She also will have a note taker for her classes so she doesn't miss anything due to her peripheral loss.

Katie does not let her deafness or loss of sight get in the way of doing what she wants. She has shown that to me over and over. She actually applied for college herself and showed me again her determination. It will not only be good for her but it is definitely going to be good for me as a parent. We don't know the timeline for Katie's sight so we just take one day at a time.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March 30, 2007

*Computer Activities for Children with Deafblindness: A Focus on Language & Literacy*  
Holiday Inn Select Airport, Indianapolis, Indiana  
For more information, contact the Indiana Deafblind Services Project at (800) 622-3035 or go to <http://web.indstate.edu/soe/blumberg/dbconf.html>.

### June 25-28, 2007

*Summer Institute on Technology and Disability: An Introduction to Assistive Technology*  
University of Washington Seattle Campus  
For more information, go to <http://uwctds.washington.edu/education/SummerInstitute.asp>.

### July 27-29, 2007

*8th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference*  
Costa Mesa, California  
For more information, go to [www.chargesyndrome.org](http://www.chargesyndrome.org).

### September 25-30, 2007

*Deafblind International 14th World Conference*  
Perth, Western Australia  
For more information, go to [www.dbiconference2007.asn.au](http://www.dbiconference2007.asn.au).