



E-BUZZ ON “ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE”

Information around the world for persons with vision loss

April 2018 (23rd edition)

Greetings from the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation!

It's our pleasure to bring forth yet another edition of E-Buzz to you!

This edition brings you updates and happenings ranging from assistive technology to accessibility, from education to training, from sports to adventure from the world around us.

Hope you find this useful. Please do share it with your contacts who you think would benefit from it.

- **Irish woman with vision loss sets staggering 12-hour treadmill running record**

Irish woman Sinead Kane has just achieved her second Guinness World Records title after running a staggering 130.50 km (81.09 miles) – around the equivalent of three marathons on a treadmill. The 35-year-old athlete broke the previous record for the greatest distance run on a treadmill by a female in 12 hours by 1.88 km. Sinead is legally blind as she only has 5% vision. She wanted to attempt this record to challenge preconceptions about disabilities. The attempt took place in the Clayton Hotel Gym with her ultra-runner coach John O'Regan there to cheer her on. John has been working with Sinead for years and was the person who encouraged her to go for this tough enduring challenge. In 2017, Sinead became the first female with vision loss to complete a marathon on each continent after completing 7 marathons on 7 continents within 7 days. As well as being a two-time Guinness World Records title holder, the inspirational woman can also boast two PhD degrees besides being a certified mediator, writer with the Irish Criminal Law Journal, qualified solicitor and a motivational speaker.

Source: <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/commercial/2018/3/blind-woman-from-ireland-sets-staggering-12-hour-treadmill-running-record-517316>

- **Graduate student from Indianapolis creates app for persons who are deaf-blind**

Persons with vision loss have been able to use smart phones through voice activation but reading them hasn't been as easy. A graduate

student from Indianapolis, Madhura Mhatre has a possible solution through an app that turns letters into digital Braille on the screen. The app is used in conjunction with a glove featuring colour-coded sensors, making it feel like the user is reading raised Braille. The glove and app prototypes were tested at the Helen Keller Institute in India. Mhatre says, “It just clicked in my mind, everyone focuses on the blind but what about the deaf-blind? There are so many deaf-blind people who really cannot afford all the bulky Braille books and devices.”

Source: <http://cbs4indy.com/2018/03/23/iupui-graduate-student-creating-smartphone-app-for-deaf-blind-community/>

- **Toddler cane helps children with vision loss move around independently**

For persons with vision impairment, a cane gives mobility and a sense of safety as they move about in the world around them. But toddlers who have vision impairment do not have the physical skills or attention span to learn to use a cane effectively. This limits the extent they can explore the world around them as they risk getting hurt. When you cannot move around safely, you stop learning, believe experts. It can lead to delays in learning language, motor, concept and social skills. The solution developed is a toddler cane, now in a prototype stage, as a lightweight device with a waistband worn right above child’s hips. It has been tested on a three and a half year old girl in New York city with considerable success. It is still in development. To find out more about it, parents can visit the website www.safetoddles.com

Source: <https://newzhook.com/story/17166>

- **Training program for breast cancer detection for women with vision loss**

The Centre for Blind Women and Disability Studies at the National Association for the Blind in New Delhi is offering a training program in breast cancer detection. This is the 2nd batch of the program being offered at the centre. This is a unique project started by Dr. Frank Hoffman, a senior gynecologist from Germany. Dr. Hoffman realized that woman with vision loss have a highly sensitized touch and tactile sense. They can be trained to detect the smallest lumps of breast cancer. This helps in early and timely detection. Once trained, the women are designated as Medical Tactile Examiners (MTEs). Those interested to undergo the training program can get more information from Veenita Gera at 9999397948 or Ajanta Pokhrel at 011 41656266 and 011 26852589 or write an email to nabindiacbw@hotmail.com.

Source: <https://newzhook.com/story/16828>

- **SIET launches audio lessons for students with vision loss**

To bring students with vision loss to the mainstream, the State Institute of Educational Technology (SIET), Kerala is introducing teaching materials in audio format with help from Prasar Bharathi. Instead of the usual practice of reading out text for students with vision loss, the SIET will focus on making the format appealing to the students through creative experiments. “We are planning to explore the possibility of audio skits, plays etc”, said B Abura, SIET director.

“Around 100 clips will be generated initially. They will be broadcasted through Doordarshan. After conversion into CD format, they will be distributed free in schools for the disabled”, he added.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/siet-launches-audio-lessons-for-the-blind/articleshow/63550940.cms>

- **This smart paint talks to canes to help persons with vision loss navigate**

The Ohio State School for the Blind is pioneering new technology that causes canes to vibrate when it touches lines of traffic paint. The crosswalk on a road in front of the Ohio State School for the Blind looks like one that might be found at any intersection but the white stripes at the edges are made with “smart paint” and if a student who has vision loss crosses while using a cane with a new smart tip, the cane will vibrate when it touches the lines. The paint uses rare-earth nanocrystals that can emit a unique light signature, which a sensor added to the tip of a cane can activate and then read. Students at the state-run boarding school which has a large enclosed campus in Columbus, Ohio, will help researchers test several crossings with the new paint on the school’s internal streets. “We are also thinking about providing them with guidance as they move down a sidewalk or guidance about whether or not they’ve arrived at a bus stop or at a certain destination”, says John Lannuti, a professor of materials science engineering at Ohio State University. “What we are envisioning is sort of a Google Maps for the blind, that says, okay, you want to go to the barbershop and sets a path for you and tells

you when you've arrived because the cane senses a stripe of paint associated with the barbershop", Lannuti says.

Source: https://www.fastcompany.com/40537928/this-smart-paint-talks-to-canes-to-help-people-who-are-blind-navigate?partner=feedburner&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=feedburner+fastcompany&utm_content=feedburner

- **National championship in Jammu for climbers with vision loss**

For climber, Sande Eshwarappa from Bangalore and many others hailing from different states across the country, vision impairment has never been an obstacle. Their undying passion for the sport is always motivating them to prove their mettle and emerge victorious. The atmosphere at the Sprawling Buds School, the venue for the first-ever national sport climbing championship for persons with vision loss was electrifying where 60 odd climbers hailing from different parts of the country were seen practicing before the competition along with their coaches. The two-day sporting event is being organized by the Mountaineering Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

Source: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/climbing-meet-passion-triumphs-over-disability/564499.html>

- **New BrailleVoice app to read news from the phone**

For persons with vision loss, there are lots of accessibility options if they want to browse the web – screen readers, podcast versions of articles and so on. But it can still be a pain for them to keep up with their favourite publications the way sighted app users do.

BrailleVoice is a project that puts the news in a touch-tone phone interface reading you the latest news from your favourite publications easily from anywhere you get a signal. All you do is dial a toll free number 1888-666-4013, then listen to the options on the menu. TechCrunch is the first outlet , so hit number 1 and it will read out the headlines. Select one (of mine - option) and it will jump right in. There are a couple of dozen sites listed right now, from LifeHacker (hit number 15) to the Times of India (hit number 26).

Source: <https://techcrunch.com/2018/03/21/get-the-latest-tc-stories-read-to-you-over-the-phone-with-braillevoice/>

Disclaimer: The information shared in this newsletter is a collection of updates and happenings from various sources as reported by them and does not solely reflect the view of our organization.

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