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VISIONS

Canadian Council of the Blind Newsletter

May 2020

“A lack of sight is not a lack of vision”

President's Message





1Louise Gillis - CCB National President

My hope is that all who read this message are feeling ok. Social isolation for the past while has been difficult for everyone but for many who had already been isolated due to sight loss it is even harder. On top of this was the horrendous act of violence in Nova Scotia that has left so many heartbroken. Words cannot say what this has meant to so many families at an already difficult time.

I want to congratulate and thank the CCB GTT group and volunteers for their great work on reaching out to our members as well as others from the vision loss community with the open lines three times a week plus all the individual assistance they are providing during this time. The monthly groups that have been going on all along are continuing as well. This contact gives many people the opportunity to stay in touch which helps to pass time for many.

Like all other organizations our staff are all working from home and can be reached by the usual means of calling the office number and through email so that everyone can still be in touch. All staff continue with their jobs and are all busy working as best as possible during this time. Because so many offices have been closed or working from home it has put many in person meetings, etc. on hold for now. We continue with our telephone board meetings and all committees are continuing their work. As soon as we have any information on changes to opening up provincial borders and the ability to move forward with business we will be advising everyone.



The CCB survey regarding COVID-19 that we sent has a great response. Thank you to all who have taken the time to fill it out. A lot has been learned, the report is near completion and will be found on our website soon. Some action items have already been undertaken such as advising retail, grocery and pharmacy store to acknowledge the needs of the people with sight loss while shopping in their stores. The appropriate Government officials will receive the recommendations based on the input from the survey. All information received with recommendations will be sent to the appropriate areas. CCB executive and board are very pleased with the



quick response time and thank you for that.

Be Safe,
Louise Gillis, National President

Accept what IS, let go of what WAS,
and have faith in what WILL BE.
Christie Warnick

Announcements

WBU survey on COVID-19

The World Blind Union (WBU) has developed a short survey to identify challenges faced by blind and partially sighted persons during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

WBU is undertaking this survey to understand how best to advocate for blind and partially sighted persons to ensure that COVID-19 response strategies are inclusive and accessible.

The survey can be completed in less than 20 minutes and it is available in English, French, and Spanish.

WBU recognizes the unprecedented challenges emerging from this pandemic and is taking the opportunity to learn and establish practical solutions and best practices for the future. We realize that your needs and solutions may vary from country to country and we want to learn from your experiences and define best strategies to overcome the pandemic. We are confident that information and data collected will become a powerful tool for our advocacy efforts among governments, UN agencies and key stakeholders.



Your testimonies will also enable us to understand how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting your day-to-day life. The learning's and practical solutions gathered will be shared widely for the benefit of our community. We want to ensure that your voices are heard, and no one is left behind.

Please take a few minutes to fill out this important survey and circulate it widely to your networks. The survey link is:
<https://forms.gle/d5NEs7yVPgS14h2Y7>

If you encounter any difficulties or accessibility issues while completing the survey, please kindly contact us at info@wbu.ngo Please also note that we may contact you to follow up on some of your responses.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Terry Mutuku

Communications and Strategic Development Officer

World Blind Union

Young Leaders Program



Fighting Blindness Canada's Young Leaders Program is a career-oriented initiative that provides young people ages 17-30 with vision loss with the tools they need to develop skills and pursue rewarding careers. Each year the program brings together participants for in-person summits. This spring, the program has gone virtual!

You can register for upcoming Young Leaders' Webinars at the links below:

[Release Anxiety and Boost Resilience: A Conversation with Laura Feltz](#)
Saturday, May 9 at 2 p.m. ET

[Opening Doors 2020: Meet the Young Leaders Co-Chairs](#)
Saturday, June 6 at 2 p.m. ET



GPS apps for vision accessibility needs

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\$0 Available for Apple and Android devices.

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better

Current as of December 1, 2019. (1) Based on total square km of coverage on the shared LTE network available from Bell vs. Rogers' LTE network. See bell.ca/LTE for details. (2) With new BlindSquare activations. Exclusive price available for a limited time only.

Assistive Technology

Using Seeing AI to Identify Products with the Handwriting Mode:

I want to share with you a tip for using Seeing AI to identify products, which I discovered while playing around with the app.

We have many tools to help us identify products including Tap Tap See, Eye-D, Be My Eyes and Seeing AI to name just a few. I want to focus on Seeing AI.



As you know, we can identify products with Seeing AI using the Short Text and Document channels to read the text on the item, or the Product channel to find and read the barcode. These work great for some items. However, I discovered that the Handwriting channel can be surprisingly helpful in identifying items.

Many products have stylized text that the Short Text and Document modes will not read. These include, for example, any item with a brand name, CDs or Albums. However, if you take a picture of the item using the Handwriting mode, the app will almost always give you enough information to identify the item. When you take the picture, Seeing AI may read a small segment of the identified text. However, if you touch near the top of the screen, you will usually find more complete information, which you can swipe to read as you would with any other text. Give it a try and you may be surprised how useful this is. I have used it to identify soft drink and beer cans, various packaged food items, Keurig coffee K-cups, and record albums. It is quicker than using Be My Eyes. Hope this helps.

Submitted by Wayne Antle

Google has launched a new braille keyboard for Android:

This is a virtual braille keyboard integrated directly into Android. So if you are blind or visually impaired you can type on your smartphone without needing any additional hardware.

The company boasts that it “collaborated with braille developers and users throughout the development of this feature, so it’ll be familiar to anyone who has typed using braille before.”



How to set Up and Use Google’s Braille Keyboard

To enable Google’s TalkBack braille keyboard, go to Settings > Accessibility > TalkBack. Turn on TalkBack, and tap OK. Then, in the TalkBack settings, select Braille Keyboard, and select Tap to set up. Select Settings, and turn on TalkBack braille keyboard.

To test that it’s working correctly, open an app where you can type, move focus to the edit field, and switch input method. Then, select TalkBack braille keyboard.

Whether you're tweeting or responding to a text, the TalkBack braille keyboard will allow you to type on your Android phone without any additional hardware. We hope this will broadly expand braille literacy among blind and low vision people

The braille keyboard uses a standard 6-key layout. Each key represents one of the six braille dots, which, when tapped either individually or together,

makes a letter or symbol. As an example, pressing 1 on its own types an A, whereas 1 and 2 together types a B.

You can also delete letters and words, add spaces, etc. using built-in gestures. As an example, swipe left to delete a letter, and swipe left with two fingers to delete a word. Or swipe right to add a space, and swipe right with two fingers to start a new line.

Other Keyboard Options for Visually Impaired Users

Google's TalkBack braille keyboard is available on all devices running Android 5.0 and later. It should work across all apps on your Android device and supports braille grades 1 and 2. It's initially only available in English, but that should change over time.



Even if this isn't for you, another option for people who are visually impaired is to change the size of the letters and icons to make them easier to see.

By Dave Parrack

Ten Conference Call Etiquette Tips for better CCB/GTT or Work meetings:

Have you ever been on a conference call where people become a distraction by forgetting to put their phone on mute, or have sidebar conversations with others not on the call? We all know a few etiquette rules for at the dinner table, but what about etiquette protocol for conference calls?

Here are some easy guidelines to follow when attending a CCB/GTT Program, or work, conference call:

- Keep track of conference call dates/times. Make sure you know when your conference call is, and be sure to keep the conference call number and pin handy so you are not scrambling to find it at the last minute. Call in to the conference line a couple minutes early and enjoy chatting with others who arrive before the meeting starts.



- To know what is happening at GTT and the CCB Open Chat conference calls, register your email address by activating the following Link near the bottom of the page on the Blog at GTTProgram.Blog (<http://www.GTTProgram.Blog>) .
- Mute your phone when you are not speaking. To help avoid distracting sounds, conversations, or noises that are not applicable to the conference call, the mute button can be your friend. Muting your phone will help you avoid embarrassing sighs, munching noises from eating your lunch, or other background noise. CCB/GTT Zoom conference calls will mostly function with all participants muted, and those who want to comment or ask questions will be encouraged to use the Raised Hand feature. Meeting facilitators will keep an eye on the list of Raised Hands and will invite participants to engage in the order the hands were raised.
- The Zoom Conference system allows you to include your name in the Participants Panel. If you use a telephone to dial into a CCB/GTT meeting, ask the Host to add your name so others can identify who's on the call. Ask a CCB/GTT staff member or volunteer to assist if you don't know how to ensure your name is included. As Zoom Bombers often don't include a name in the Participants List we may remove you from a call if unnamed in such instances.
- State your name and where you're from before speaking. Since the conference call attendees are not all in the same room, it is important for others on the line to know who is speaking so that they can better understand the context of your comments.

- Be prepared to discuss the topic at hand. Like with all meetings, you should do a little prep work or jot down topics or questions that you would like to bring up on the conference call.



- Keep background noise to a minimum. When you take your phone off mute to speak or to get ready to chime in, make sure that you are not distracting the other callers. This noise may be generated from standing outside in the wind, typing on your computer, kids running around, pets barking, side conversations with people in your vicinity just to

name a few. It is best to find a quiet location for the conference call.

- Maintain a good telephone or Wi-Fi reception. A bad connection often causes static or dropped calls making your input to the conference call hard to understand, in which case you may have to call back into the meeting.
- Many CCB/GTT meetings will have an agenda and it will usually be provided before the conference call. Be sure to attend even if it isn't a topic you need to learn about, as you might be able to assist others in their learning, and bring questions for the Q and A section of the meeting as there is usually time left for general discussion even when there is a topic on the agenda.
- CCB/GTT meetings will always have a defined facilitator and technical host. The facilitator will guide the conversation, introduce any presenters, make sure everyone sticks to the agenda and pays attention to time, the host will look after muting and unmuting the call, renaming participants in the Participants List, lowering hands and recording calls that lend themselves to being recorded.

Introducing a New Assistive Technology Blog: Windows from the Keyboard Tips

Hello. This is Gerry Chevalier from the GTT Edmonton Chapter. This weekly blog provides tips that I find useful as a keyboard user of Windows. The information is for Windows10 and Office 365, although many tips still apply to older versions. The tips do not require a screen reader unless specifically noted. Thus, the tips apply whether you are a keyboard user or low vision mouse user. Here is a new tip.



Web Browsers – Installing Firefox and Chrome Standard Windows 10 computers have two choices for web browsers: Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge. Internet Explorer has not been supported by Microsoft for many years now. It is old, slow, and unreliable on many web sites. Microsoft Edge is its replacement and although Edge is a modern browser it is still problematic to use with screen readers. Two other modern web browsers that work well with screen readers are Firefox from Mozilla and Chrome from Google. Many people install both these browsers on their Windows systems for added flexibility. Both are free.

To get the Firefox program go to the Firefox Download site and activate the download link. A Firefox install program ending with filetype of EXE will be downloaded to your computer. Run this install program and follow the instructions. If Windows asks whether this program can modify your system, choose, Yes. Once Firefox is installed on your computer, visit its Help menu where you will find extensive keyboard shortcuts for quickly performing Firefox tasks.



To get Google Chrome go to the Chrome Download site and activate the download button. Another window will open with a button to download and install Chrome. Activate this button and follow the instructions. Once Google Chrome is installed, you may wish to also read about its keyboard shortcuts.

After these browsers are installed, you should find icons on your desktop to run them. You can also select a default browser app to use when you activate links from other programs. Setting a default browser is explained in the next tip.

That's it for this tip. Until next time, happy computing.

GTT Zooming Forward through the current Physical Distancing Situation

The COVID-19 pandemic means that we all must observe 'physical distancing' in order to 'flatten the curve' and stem the spread of the Coronavirus. Whether you are distancing or in isolation, there is no need to feel isolated. Now more than ever, technology allows us to be more 'connected' even when we have to spend time apart.

Blindness and low vision sometimes causes the need for additional supports like sighted guides and visual assistance in our homes and communities, which is greatly impacted by the need to "Physically Distance" ourselves. In such instances it isn't just the virus that is isolating us, its blindness or low vision that is intensifying the situation.



The CCB's GTT program enacting plans to support Canadians who are blind and partially sighted. We will help you to learn how to stay safe and connected. If you need assistance with your technology, this will now be provided through one-on-one telephone training sessions and with 90-minute open chat calls three times a week, and through the already-available GTTSupport email distribution list, WhatsApp Group, GTTProgram.Blog site and on Facebook. One-on-one telephone coaching sessions can also be facilitated should people need to learn how to download audiobooks from Canada's accessible Libraries, or to learn how to get sighted assistance through BeMyEyes and Aira services using smart phones and tablets. See below for booking information.



Zoom Conferencing One-On-One Tutorial Sessions: GTT staff and volunteers will be available for one-on-one telephone sessions aimed at assisting those who want to learn how to install and use the very accessible Zoom Conferencing system on iOS devices, Android

devices, or PC and Mac computers. For one-on-one training sessions contact GTT staff and volunteers as per below.

In the meantime, download the app for your device by following the below links to download the Zoom Cloud Meeting app for:

[Zoom For Windows Computers;](#)

[Zoom for Mac Computers;](#)

[Zoom for iOS from the AppStore;](#)

[Zoom for Android from the Google Play Store.](#)

Weekly youth Zoom meetings!

GTT is hosting a weekly Zoom call for youth. During these meetings participants discuss things like, what is your favourite phone application. What is something new that's getting you excited is there a new piece of technology you're really enjoying?

We discuss everything under the sun and are open to any suggestions. Our goals are to create a strong supportive community where all ideas/questions are welcome and sharing our tech knowledge whom ever might hold it.



We are currently holding meetings every Wednesday at 2 PM EDT. The meetings will be held on Zoom cloud meetings. The web address which will take you directly to the meeting room is:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/5593858367?pwd=ckxOQzRhWTdTNzR0bDZWUm40NFJMdz09>

for further information please feel free to contact the CCB national office where you can be directed to David Green.

CCB national office phone number: 1-877-304-0968 extension: 509 or simply ask our receptionist

David Green's email: accessibilitytraining7@gmail.com

GTT Weekly Open Chats: Building Community among Canada's blind and low vision population

For 90 minutes each Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM (Eastern), GTT staff and/or volunteers will host a vision loss and blindness related Zoom call to discuss all manner of assistive technology and adjustment to blindness issues that are on your mind. These calls are free of charge, and the topics are open, and will address a variety of needs. For now only the Wednesday calls will be facilitated, however if the need arises for all gatherings to be lead by a facilitator that will be added in due course. Connect with us through your landline telephone, iDevice, Android device or computer as best suits your interests and abilities.

Here's how to get connected:

Join the GTT Open Chat Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/9839595688>

Meeting ID: 983 959 5688

Toronto One tap mobile for Smart

Phones:

+15873281099,,9839595688#

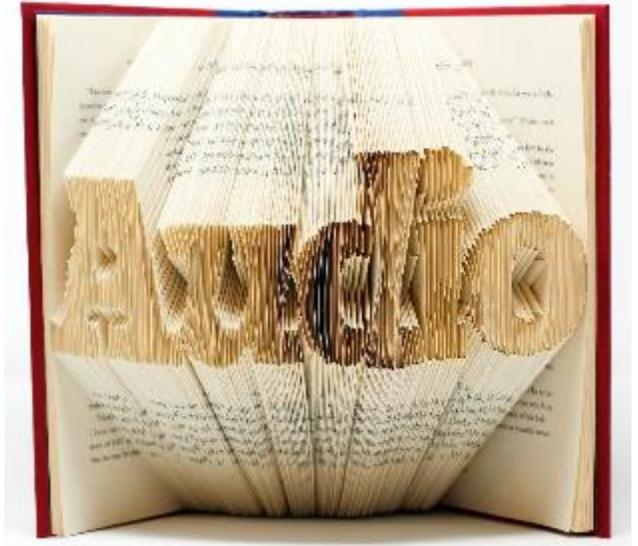
Toronto: +16473744685

Alberta: +1 587 328 1099

BC: +1 778 907 2071 Canada

Manitoba: +1 204 515 1268

Montreal: +1 438 809 7799



GTT Audiobook Download Tutorial Sessions:

While in-person book clubs may have been cancelled and libraries may have closed, staying at home means that you have more time to catch up on your reading. Are you struggling to download audiobooks from your favourite Library; has the volunteer who usually does this for you had to self-isolate? GTT staff and volunteers can help you learn how to download the audiobooks you need into the listening device you own.

BeMyEyes and Aira for Sighted Assistance:

If you can't have visits with people in your community and/or your family supports you count on to get those important things done around home or beyond on a daily basis, and if you have a smart phone or tablet, let GTT show you how to connect with sighted volunteers and staff of these two services so they can help. Contact GTT staff and volunteers for your one-on-one session to learn how to utilize the free BeMyEyes and subscription based Aira services.

Online Shopping:

If you need to do more online grocery and other types of shopping, and your access to such apps and websites is a struggle, contact GTT staff and volunteers and book a time for someone to coach you to learn the app or website that best meets your shopping needs. Please be sure to let us know the specific store(s) where you want to shop so the right person can be assigned to coach you.



Podcasts and Streaming:

Are you finding yourself with more time on your hands these days? Would you like to learn how to stream movies, podcasts and other forms of entertainment? GTT may be able to help, so contact us and book a time for a telephone or Zoom coaching session.

GTTProgram.Blog Site, for all GTT Events and Activities:

On the GTT Program Blog site you will find postings of all the upcoming events and activities we have planned, as well as some useful resources that might help you to stay connected. Register your email address on this site and all that gets posted there will land seamlessly in your Inbox in an easy to read format. If you're not successful at the below steps, ask Albert Ruel to add you by email at:

Albert.GTT@CCBNational.net



To get started, go to:

<https://gttprogram.wordpress.com/>

Near the bottom of the page find and click on the Follow Link, type your email address and click on the Submit Button. That will prompt the system to send you a

Confirmation email message, and once you have clicked on the Confirm Button within that message you'll be registered. Welcome aboard.

Book Your One-On-One GTT Training Session Today:

Toll Free: +1-877-304-0968

Kim Kilpatrick, GTT Coordinator, Extension 513 GTTProgram@Gmail.com

Albert Ruel, GTT Coordinator, Extension 550,

Albert.GTT@CCBNational.net

David Greene, GTT Trainer, Extension 509

AccessibilityTraining7@Gmail.com

CCB and GTT on Social Media:



GTT Blog: <https://GTTProgram.Blog/>

URL: <http://CCBNational.net/fresco/>

CCB Facebook: <https://www.Facebook.com/CCBNational>

GTT Facebook

Group: <https://m.facebook.com/groups/414313508657159?refid=27>

GTT Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/GTTatCCB/>

Twitter: @GTTWest @GTTProgram @CCBNational

In the News

More Wildlife Sightings During Pandemic:

MONTREAL - When Josianne Plante looked out her window on a recent morning, she was surprised to see a pair of large, bare-headed wild turkeys going for a walk through her east-end Montreal neighbourhood.

"They were just walking down the street and sidewalk like nothing was happening," the Pointe-aux-Trembles resident said in a recent interview.



"I've never seen anything like that before here."

With countries around the world on lockdown due to COVID-19, many people have been reporting seeing more wildlife, and Canada is no different.

Sightings of common urban species such as skunks, raccoons, white-tailed deer, rabbits and foxes in the greater

Montreal area have increased since the pandemic began. The fewer cars and quieter streets and parks mean normally shy animals are roaming more freely.

Turkeys are not normally an animal that is seen in communities. The most frequently spotted animal is rats. Increased sightings of wildlife have been happening all across Canada.

It's too soon to know if less boat traffic could have a positive impact on marine mammals. Shipping traffic in the St-Lawrence River hasn't slowed down so far, but less pleasure boats and whale-watching could really help whales, which are known to be disturbed by engine noise and vibrations. Ocean life experts don't know if it will have a lasting impact on whales. Less disturbance during



breeding season could allow some species to raise larger litters, while less boat traffic could reduce fatal collisions.

The human impact on animals is still big, including from roads and dams that cut through their habitats. People are reminded not to feed the wildlife, and to keep a safe distance and not disturb them.

Experts are hoping that this time will help us realize that we could be doing a better job of living alongside nature.

A Tribute to Wendy McQuade

By Pierre Castagner



Figure 2 Wendy McQuade

As COVID-19 challenges each and every one of us in different ways and to varying extents, we were notified of some sad news concerning one of our members. It is with much sorrow that we announce the passing of our dear friend Wendy McQuade.

Wendy was a long-time member of the CCB Ottawa Chapter. Wendy helped to organize two boat tours (Thousand Islands and Ottawa River), and a winery visit for our members. She ran for the position of Vice-President during the last election, and took on the role of elf, helping Santa to plan the annual Christmas party. Wendy showed up at the CCB Blind Curlers group, she bowled and trained weekly with many of her CCB friends as part of the Jack Purcell Community Centre's Friday Night Fitness program. Wendy was thinking about getting a guide dog, and attended the Guide Dog meetings at the CCB National office. In her free time, she was a vocal activist with the AEBC Ottawa/Gatineau Chapter and was co-planning a Sugar Bush trip for the members of the CNIB Grads' Group (Ottawa).

Wendy was hospitalized on Wednesday, April 1st, after feeling unwell suddenly a day earlier. She was immediately sent to the Intensive Care unit,

connected to a ventilator and maintained in a medically- induced coma. Doctors and nurses provided her with amazing care but were unable to save her. Wendy passed away on Easter Sunday, April 12.

Although we realize all the sadness that we are currently feeling, what struck many about Wendy was her true kindness, her sense of humor and her love of laughter - she was a very welcome addition to every group she joined. Wendy was a warm and wonderful person that will be greatly missed.



May our positive memories of Wendy inspire all of us to see the good side in others, promoting kindness and joy.

www.ccbnational.net
ccb@ccbnational.net



1-877-304-0968