

# Deafblind International Youth Network (DbIYN)

## Summer Newsletter 2014



- We are very pleased to report that membership continues to grow steadily since our formation in January 2014. We have 155 young deafblind members and 55 associate members from 5 different continents
- Our team of 15 country representatives are in place world wide to share information on the network with their colleagues. Countries represented are Malawi, France, USA, Norway, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Romania, New Zealand, Netherlands, Iceland, Finland, Brazil, Denmark and Sweden
- Through our social media pages we have provided an opportunity for young deafblind members to form links with each other. Our Country representatives have been able to assist with communication support to nurture and develop these friendships
- Thank You to Bridget Curry from the UK for designing the DbIYN logo at the top of this page



**Success  
Stories**

DbIYN is to publish a collection of inspirational 'Success Stories' from youth network members  
Extracts from some of the stories are featured here:

"After my Father passed away my mother could not sustain us financially. The word 'home' was replaced by a long series of placement centres and foster homes for children with disabilities" (Andrew)

"I was a very shy boy in the early years of school. I used to hide my eyes when someone looked at me. I faced a lot of challenges and tried to destroy barriers" (Costel)

"I was used to my deafness, to find out I was to lose my sight was terrifying" (Lisa)

"It took many years to adjust to my new life as a deafblind person. It was frustrating but it didn't rob me of my tenacity and determination for life" (Ruairi)

"From an early age I became aware of my deafblindness. People just used to say I was clumsy. I remember wanting to tell people that I could not see or hear properly" (Zena)

"I have something to tell you, my mom began. I looked up at her, giving my undivided attention. You are going blind. You won't be able to see when you're older, she continued, and demonstrated what she was saying with her hands slowly covering her eyes with her fingers" (Tiffany)

# International News Update



Following the huge success of their Deafblind Camp in 2012, Senses Australia will be holding their second camp at Hillary's (north of Perth) in November 2014. Plans are currently underway and information is being sent out to the Deafblind community in Australia. Some of the activities on offer this year are likely to include archery, rock climbing, caving, flying fox and abseiling. Contact: [karen.wickham@senses.org.au](mailto:karen.wickham@senses.org.au)



Alex with Volunteer Paul at the 2012 camp



Sense International (Romania) has developed three vocational centres where young deafblind people can learn new trades in a safe environment with the support of teachers trained in the field of deafblindness. The three centers function within special schools and more centres are planned in the future. The purpose of each centre is to enable deafblind young people in Romania to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities to find employment.



Students at two of the centres based in Lasi and Galati  
Contact: [potopmara@yahoo.com](mailto:potopmara@yahoo.com)

A working group within the National Advisory Unit on Deafblindness in Norway invites Norwegian youth to Eikholt National Resource Centre on 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The event will focus on young people (aged between 15 and 30 years) from Norway who live with Usher syndrome.

The event will also have organised activities including bowling, go-carting and rock climbing. Contact: [trine.seljeseth@unn.no](mailto:trine.seljeseth@unn.no)



The Swedish Deaf Blind Youth (DBU) association was formed in September 1994 with a membership of about 50 young people. A number of activities have been planned for 2014. During May, DBU have organised a spring reunion weekend with the focus on addressing 'health' related issues. Summer camp will be held during one week in July, with the theme of 'film'. DBU want to create a 'members' film that can be used as material to inform various schools and agencies about the association. This is just in time for the DBU 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September 2014

Contact: [teresia.lindberg@dbu.nu](mailto:teresia.lindberg@dbu.nu)



'One Giant Leap' project (Scotland) has been really busy with two separate boys and girl's weekend holidays to Craig Tara in Ayr. Both weekends were full of action packed activities including archery, bowling, target shooting, roller dancing, wall climbing, bungee jumping, fairground rides and swimming. Despite the cold temperatures many new friendships were developed and current one's made stronger. Fundraising has been very successful with events such as pyjama days, 5 mile hike, X factor competition and many more to follow. All the members have been working towards the forthcoming Service User Conference and have been involved in the new name, logo and website as well as delivering presentations. Contact: [mmackenzie@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:mmackenzie@sensescotland.org.uk)



The New York Deaf-Blind Collaborative has designed informal gatherings for children and young adults with Usher Syndrome and their families to come together to learn and laugh in a casual setting. These sessions are scheduled every couple of months and take place on a weekend to accommodate family's schedules. Different topics related to supporting the independence of students with Usher Syndrome and their families is pre-determined to allow for expansion of knowledge and resources. Contact: [Susanne.Morrow@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:Susanne.Morrow@qc.cuny.edu)

The UK Sense 'Get Out There' group will be taking part in a fashion show evening, raising funds for the group. The young people will experience modelling clothes on the catwalk. The group is also looking forward to an X Factor show where young people will provide entertainment for families and friends. A summer camping holiday in August will include activities such as surfing, swimming, and archery. Contact: [simon.allison@sense.org.uk](mailto:simon.allison@sense.org.uk)



The Icelandic Institute for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Deafblind will be participating in the leaders forum with the Nordic Welfare Center. The event will take place in June in Iceland. Guest speakers at the conference will be 18 year old Áslaug Ýr Hjartardóttir and 19 year old Snædís Rán Hjartardóttir. Snædís is the youth network country representative for Iceland. The title of the presentations is "How people with combined sensory disabilities communicate decisions and wishes". Contact: [estella@midstod.is](mailto:estella@midstod.is)



## MEMBERS PROFILE PAGE



Jason meets the President

My home town is Baltimore. I am president of the Baltimore Association of the Deafblind and the DbIYN representative for the USA. In my spare time I enjoy travelling, outdoor activities, presenting to the community about Deafblind awareness. I have a guide dog called Spencer.

I have been lucky enough to meet some well known people including our President Obama, and our first deaf lawyer Claudius Gorden. For the future, I plan to finish my Master's Degree in Information Systems at John Hopkins University. Visit Jason's web site on [www.jacorning.info](http://www.jacorning.info)

**Jason  
Corning  
USA**



**Maxinicole  
Banson  
New Zealand**

I live in Auckland, New Zealand and am 22 years of age. I am the youngest in my family and both my parents are engineers. I use ASL to communicate with my family. Both myself and my family are also learning tactile sign language. I moved to New Zealand from the Philippines in 2008 and attended Kelston Deaf School. I then went to the 'Sparks' centre to study art. I am now attending 'Elevator'. This is a transition provider that is supporting me to access employment opportunities.

## **Network Membership**

Membership is open to all young Deafblind people between the ages of 15 and 25 years. Associate membership is for those who support Deafblind youth and / or interested in the issues of importance to Deafblind youth.



Network Coordinator [simon.allison@sense.org.uk](mailto:simon.allison@sense.org.uk)



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## **Next Newsletter**

Send your stories, articles and news to the network coordinator by August 31st 2014. Our next issue has features including:

- A group of network members who have written and performed a play about the life of Helen Keller.
- Molly Watt, a young lady with Usher Syndrome who along with her family has set up The Molly Watt Trust.
- The work of VIHEMA Malawi and exciting developments in supporting Deafblind young people.

***"It is not possible for civilization to flow backwards while there is youth in the world" (Helen Keller)***

