

NDVS/SB OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

NDVS/SB provides individualized services and resources to infants, children, and adults with visual impairment to empower them in achieving their goals.

Project Little Room Finishes BIG!

Since March 2020, the NDSB Foundation has been soliciting donations from North Dakota Lions Clubs for Project Little Room. Little Rooms are child-sized partitions that are designed to give infants who are blind the opportunity to practice reaching and grasping and to begin to understand the concepts of space and objects. Different objects hang from the “ceiling” of the Little Room and may rest gently on the child’s stomach or above their head for them to reach for and grasp. Textures and objects can also be placed on the three walls of the Little Room. The child’s feet stick out, allowing the child to move and kick.

Little Rooms were first conceptualized by Lilli Nielsen, a Danish psychologist who taught children who were blind or had multiple disabilities. Her curriculums and teachings on Active Learning are still considered groundbreaking today, and Little Rooms are utilized by children served by North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind who could benefit from their use. This fundraising project began when the need for Little Rooms outweighed our current supply. Thanks to the generosity of Lions Clubs around the state and the North Dakota Association of the Blind, the NDSB Foundation is now able to purchase twelve new Little Rooms for NDVS/SB.

The goal of this project was to raise \$35,000 in order to purchase at least 10 Little Rooms from Lilliworks, a company that specializes in Active Learning products and is named after Lilli Nielsen. Even with the COVID pandemic occurring, Project Little Room efforts continued and North Dakota Lions Clubs along with other interested parties forged ahead to see this effort through. It took a bit more time to get the word out and raise the funds, but the \$35,000 goal has now been met! Thank you to the NDSB Foundation, NDAB, and all of the ND Lions Clubs who so generously supported Project Little Room! Many children will benefit from these Little Rooms for many years to come.



Pictured above and below is a new Little Room that was assembled by the NDVS/SB maintenance team. It will soon be available for use in the home of a child with a visual impairment to support their development and learning.



CVI Resource Spotlight: The Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment Society

Did you know CVI is the leading cause of visual impairment in children in developed countries?

Approximately 30 – 40% of children with visual impairments have CVI. The Pediatric Cortical Visual Impairment Society is a community of doctors, educators, therapists, parents, and advocates who are working together to answer questions about CVI. The PCVIS was created to advocate for children with CVI, heighten public awareness, and promote research and other activities that lead to improvement in vision care for children with CVI. Through interdisciplinary education and research, and ongoing advocacy for awareness and resources, PCVIS hopes to improve the quality of life for all children with CVI. They envision a future with complete access to appropriate medical care, education, and intervention. Check out their [website](#) for more information.

APH FAQs

You may have heard your child's TVI or Regional Coordinator talk about "APH products" or just "APH." Do you know what APH stands for? Or why your child receives free products and textbooks from APH? Find out a bit about APH's history and services below.

What does APH stand for?

APH stands for the American Printing House for the Blind. APH is headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, and was founded in 1858. In 1879, Congress appropriated funding for students who were blind for the first time, with the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind. Since then, APH has been printing books and making products for students who are blind and distributing them across the country.

What is APH?

The American Printing House for the Blind is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes independent living for people who are blind or visually impaired through the unique products and services it creates and sells. APH is federally funded, and each state is designated a certain amount of money to spend on APH products based on the number of students living in that state who are blind or visually impaired. Each state has a designated Ex Officio Trustee who oversees the Census process and ensures that the funds the state receives each year are being spent responsibly.

Why does my child get free products and textbooks from APH?

It does seem like APH products are free, but they are paid for with federal funds that are assigned to each state. If your child qualifies for the APH Census, and you give permission for your child to be included on the Census, then they are eligible to receive APH products and textbooks for educational purposes. All American tax-payers have helped pay for these products and services.

How much money does North Dakota receive in quota funds?

The amount of money fluctuates depending on how many students are on the Census each year, and how much money is designated to APH in the federal budget. In 2020, North Dakota had 296 students listed on the Census, and a total of \$123,948 to spend on APH products and textbooks because the federal allocation per student was \$418.75. That may seem like a lot of money, but because of the high cost of these products, it goes quickly. For example, one braille textbook can cost several thousands dollars. Technology items like video magnifiers or braille displays can also cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. For this reason, we have to be very careful when spending quota funds and ensure that only students who are on the Census are receiving and using the items.



Region 3 Coordinator Kathy Grzadziewski created a Golden Guide on the abacus, an APH product and essential math tool for students with vision loss. [Check it out!](#)

Can I request items for my child to use at home?

If you and your child's TVI agree that the item will be used for your child's education, yes, parents can request APH items through their TVI to use in the home.

Can I buy products directly from APH?

You sure can! Visit aph.org to shop on their website or to request a print catalog.

What other services does APH offer?

Over the last few years, APH has greatly expanded its services. Its website is a hub for resources on living with vision loss and offers training tools for teachers, families, and vision professionals. The Tactile Graphic Image Library has downloadable tactile images that are ready to print/emboss. The APH Hive offers webinars and trainings for teachers and vision professionals. FamilyConnect provides valuable information and support for parents. The Access Academy has training webinars on how to get the most out of APH products and services. And the ExCel Academy provides online learning opportunities for students of all abilities for free. Visit aph.org to learn more – There are many more resources there!

Who should I contact at NDVS/SB if I have a question about APH?

You can always ask your TVI or Regional Coordinator about APH. Emily Stenberg Brown is the Ex Officio Trustee for North Dakota, and Lilly Mankie is the Assistant. Feel free to reach out to either of them with any questions. Contact Emily at estenber@nd.gov or 701-795-2709 and Lilly at lmankie@nd.gov or 701-795-2732.

We can't wait to see you in person or virtually! Hybrid sessions will be offered via Zoom.

SAVE THE DATE
NDVS/SB FAMILY WEEKEND

First Lutheran Church
619 Broadway, Fargo, ND

FRIDAY NIGHT & SATURDAY APRIL 22 & 23

"THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN'T DO IN 2022"