

IS BRAILLE FOR ME?

If reading print within your environment is becoming difficult for you and you find that accommodations such as large print, magnifiers and other assistive devices are no longer helpful, it may be worth considering braille.

Braille is not limited to those without vision, and it is often used by those with low vision who require some more tactile feedback. You might want to learn basic characters to assist with identifying the numbers on your microwave or with other routines. Or, it can lead to learning the entire braille code and reading books with the touch of your finger.

If you are interested in learning Braille or determining if it is right for you, contact Erika at 717-205-4158.

HELLO, ECHO SHOW!

Smart home devices are very popular. You may have heard mention of Alexa, who is Amazon's smart assistant, who "talks" on Amazon smart devices such as the Firestick, Echo Dot, Echo, and Echo Show. Echo Show is the latest smart device and it can may make your world more accessible.

Ask the Echo Show your normal daily questions such as the time, date, news, set an alarm, set a timer, play games, read recipes, make phone calls, listen to music, listen to audio books, and more. The Echo Show can do all these, including -- everything the Echo Dot and Echo can do -- and can support video calling. All Amazon smart devices can be customized to your needs via skills.

What's significant about the Echo Show is its Smart Display with an eight-inch HD screen available on Echo 8 (\$99-\$129.99) and soon-to-be-released 10.1 inch HD screen, available on Echo Show 10 (now available for pre-order, \$249.99).

With its Smart Display, you can do video calls with others who use the Alexa app and/or have an Echo with a screen. You can also use the Echo to answer phone calls from people who have Echo devices, the Alexa app or landlines and mobile phones.

There is also the option of using the Echo Show for "Show and Tell," where you can hold an item in front of the screen and ask, "What am I holding?" The Echo Show will then describe the object in your hands. The Echo Show 10 will swivel toward the sound of your voice so that the screen is always facing you.

If you would like to learn more or see a demonstration of the Echo Show, please contact Stacie at 717-205-4143.

MICROSOFT SOUNDSCAPE

It is difficult if you are blind or have low vision to explore your surroundings when traveling to a new place. Microsoft Soundscape, a free app available for iPhone and android phones, can make this easier.

This app allows you to set a beacon at a desired destination and follow various sound cues to travel in the direction of that beacon. The app has My Location, Around Me and Ahead of Me features to give you an idea of where you are by naming intersections and locations to the left and right of your travel path, such as businesses, and restaurants.

While the app cannot provide turn-by-turn directions, and is sometimes a bit off in the number of feet to an intersection or destination, it is still a good way to explore new places, and find specific locations. If you would like to learn more, please contact Orientation and Mobility services at 717-205-4140.

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CONTACT: 717-205-4141 for Rehabilitation



THE Magnifier

Rehabilitation services newsletter for clients & friends of VisionCorps

By the time you receive this letter, it will almost be the New Year.

I can look back over the last year and say out of the 18 years I've worked at VisionCorps, 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most challenging for our agency. But it also makes me very proud of our talented and dedicated team who give it all every day to help our clients. Safety is our first priority, and with a lot of thought and creative approaches, we're happy to be able to continue providing services to our clients.

Many lessons have been learned. Our department provides more technologically advanced and flexible services. There is no substitute for face-to-face instruction, but our hybrid approach to service delivery has allowed us to become more efficient and still meet clients where they are. As an agency, we continue to provide competitive employment that compliments the comprehensive and individualized services that are being delivered in the community.

I know that feelings of isolation can be overwhelming for everyone. VisionCorps continues to expand its menu of virtual options. With new groups that address specific needs, I'm confident there is something for everyone. These programs are the heart and soul of VisionCorps and are at the core of our mission.

As we transition into a new year, please feel safe knowing that we are here for you. Please feel free to contact your case manager, or myself, by calling 717-205-4141 to connect to Rehab.

Be safe and healthy,

Chris Ament, Vice President
Rehabilitation and Education