



# *Annual Report*

New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired 2016-2017

# Superintendent's Letter

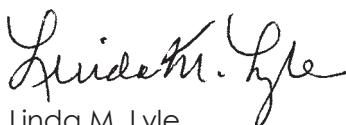
July 1, 2017

Dear NMSBVI Family and Partners,

The 2016-17 school year, represented in these pages, tells a story of resilience, successes, struggles and triumphs. It is a story repeated for the past 114 years at NMSBVI. As we gathered on the residential campus for the commencement ceremony that would transition Lawrence and Zackery from school days to the world of adulthood, I could not help but reflect on what those two young men represented. One had been a student at NMSBVI for nine years; the other, for one. Like all of our students, both came in need of intensive support around the expanded core curriculum of blindness. Using the time we were given with each young man, we provided structured learning, opportunities to explore employment as well as meaningful discussions that helped them shape goals and plans for their future. As a result, as we bid each of these young men farewell, we knew that our time together had been well spent and that these young men are better prepared to move into adulthood because of their time with us. We are at our best when we are making a difference in the lives of our students and their families.

This year marked several "firsts" for the school. In April, we celebrated our first annual Innovations Fair where twenty-seven innovative projects were available for staff & the public to view and discuss. The Neuro-Imaging Visual Impairment partnership between NMSBVI, Dr. John Philips and the Mind Institute submitted the first of its articles for publication in a professional journal of blindness. 2017 saw the revitalization of the blindness professional organization, NMAER, and a beloved conference returned to New Mexico as a result. The renovation of the original Watkins Education Center (old WEC), Ditzler Auditorium and the Recreation Center continues into 2017-18. Once the project is completed, students will once again have access to many fun activities including bowling and pottery classes!

After 22 years with NMSBVI, this will be my final annual report to you. I will retire on June 30th, 2017. In the words of Althea Gibson, "No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you." Serving as the Superintendent of the New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. There is no group of people more precious than those who make up my NMSBVI family and those partners who work on our behalf. I am grateful for the passion, the excellence in educational practice, the ability to reflect and grow from challenges, the openness to learn and to try new things, the willingness to celebrate the successes of others and to stand together and share the struggles. I leave NMSBVI and its legacy of 114 years in the hands of the most capable, competent men and women; I am certain that NMSBVI will continue to make a difference! We hope you enjoy this year's story!



Linda M. Lyle  
NMSBVI Superintendent



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# Introducing Our New Superintendent...

August 2017

After an extensive Superintendent search process, the NMSBVI Board of Regents are excited and proud to introduce our new Acting Superintendent, Patricia Beecher.

Superintendent Beecher is not a new face to NMSBVI; she has been with the school since 2004.

Ms. Beecher received her degree in elementary education from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame. She taught students with autism in Chicago for several years while obtaining her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). Then she moved to New Mexico and was a Speech-Language therapist for ten years, serving students between ages 5 and 14 years in New Mexico Public Schools. During that time, in addition to working for a public school district, she worked as an SLP at the University of New Mexico Hospital and at Carrie Tingley Hospital, serving children and adults.

In 2004, Ms. Beecher became the SLP for NMSBVI's Early Childhood Program (ECP) and then moved into administration, becoming the Program Coordinator for the ECP in 2008.

The Board of Regents are confident that Superintendent Beecher will work with the Board and the NMSBVI Staff to continue to see that the mission of the school — "every student, every day in the right setting with appropriate goals and materials taught by a highly qualified teacher of the visually impaired" — will be carried out to the benefit of the students and their parents.

Above all, we are confident that with Superintendent Beecher's leadership, NMSBVI will continue to provide exemplary, innovative educational experiences for those children entrusted to our care.

Best regards,

Alicia McAninch  
President, NMSBVI Board of Regents



# History of the School

As a network of services, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) staff can be found in hospitals, in family homes, in classrooms, at Low Vision Clinics and in university classrooms. This hasn't always been the case. When NMSBVI (originally called the Institute for the Blind) was officially created by the territorial New Mexico Legislature in 1903, the goal was to establish a residential campus that would house the state's students who were blind and provide for their education and upbringing. To that end, 20 acres were set aside in Otero County for this purpose and an \$8,000 appropriation from the legislative process was used to build the first education building in Alamogordo, New Mexico. As the number of students grew, the need for additional buildings grew as well. In 1925, R.R. Pratt, the school's superintendent, invited Helen Keller to help him lobby in Santa Fe. Helen Keller and Elizabeth Garrett, daughter of lawman Pat Garrett, addressed a joint session of the New Mexico Legislature on behalf of the school and were successful in raising \$65,000 for expansion.

Through the years, school staff as well as the Board of Regents have grappled with ways to meet the programmatic needs of their students. Programming has changed dramatically through the years. Some students are now educated in their home schools with short bursts of intensive instruction on the residential campus. Career exploration remains an essential component of blindness education but chair caning and piano tuning have given way to individualized career plans that teach job skills matching the interest of each student. Braille and independent travel skills continue to be a priority, and students now have extensive exposure to the expanded core curriculum of blindness.

One thing that has not changed through the years is the abiding belief that independence is essential for every student, and the development of independence requires the engagement of everyone. With the understanding that independence comes when everyone has promoted its development throughout a child's life, in 1974 the school opened a second campus in Albuquerque to provide services to children aged 3-6, who need to learn early blindness skills. In the late 1990's, the school established a statewide birth-to-3 homebased program that has become a national model for visual impairment (VI) services to very young children and their families. A Low Vision Clinic, a university teacher preparation program, technology lending library, and an extensive mentorship program for teachers have all followed. At every level, NMSBVI continues to live its mission: every child in New Mexico, every day, will be educated in an appropriate setting with programming and materials that are accessible; and will have access to highly qualified teachers of the visually impaired.

**The Continuing Mission of NMSBVI:** NMSBVI, an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-to-high school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify and ensure quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners to provide outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus ensuring that all students who are blind or visually impaired will become independent, productive members of their communities.



# Strategic Plan

**Linda Lyle, Retired Superintendent**

The NMSBVI's strategic plan is a dynamic document that drives decision-making at every level. The plan centers on six overarching goals that support all of the initiatives of the school. The goals include:

- (1) Fostering an atmosphere of creativity;
- (2) Creating a training system that results in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment in the state;
- (3) Creating a system to convey and receive information about blindness;
- (4) Building a system of data-driven decision-making to help support the needs of the students throughout New Mexico;
- (5) Developing a system throughout the state that supports students as they transition across programs and into adult life;
- (6) Developing partnerships and resources that will be used to advance the success of each student.



Each broad goal has specific objectives with timelines for implementation. During FY17, several milestones were achieved. The school established an Innovation and Development Department and hired its first Innovation Specialist. The Leadership Advisory team for the university teacher preparation program (VIP) interviewed and accepted eighteen students into the Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TSVI) and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) cohorts for FY18.

In addition to the VIP, NMSBVI provided statewide training in the field of blindness. The school was instrumental in getting NMAER (blindness professional organization) functional in the state and hosted a conference in February. Learning circles for VI professionals offered an opportunity to meet with colleagues and share cutting-edge information from the field. NMSBVI staff continued throughout the year to present at national conferences.

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the year was the development of the statewide database for visual impairment. Named NMVICount, the database will permit districts to register their eligible students in the national and supplemental registries; order accessible materials; and assign students to caseloads. NMSBVI will be able to develop programs for students and training for VI professionals based on the data available in NMVICount.



# Collaborations *Linda Lyle, Retired Superintendent*

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." When considering services for New Mexico students who are blind/visually impaired, H.E. Luccock's words ring true. To successfully meet the myriad challenges that arise when serving all of New Mexico's students who are blind/VI, many partnerships are necessary. The partnerships vary and provide support in many different ways, but all are essential to the success of our shared students. The school has enjoyed many partnerships this year. Here are a few:

- **Higher Education Partnership:** The New Mexico State University (NMSU)/NMSBVI partnership continues to provide educational training for NM teachers through the Vision Impairment Program (VIP). As a result over the past ten years, more than 100 teachers in New Mexico have become licensed Teachers of the Visually Impaired or Certified Orientation and Mobility Instructors.
- **Funding Partners:** Like most schools, adequate funding is always an issue. Partnerships support NMSBVI's efforts to acquire the funding necessary to meet the needs of the school. The Navajo Nation provides funding for a developmental specialist; the 2017 legislators provided funding for aviation services for students living in remote areas who need to attend the residential campus; as well as money for the Low Vision Clinic and the Early Childhood Program. The NMSBVI Foundation provided funding for unmet needs of the school throughout the year.
- **Research Partners:** The school enjoyed research partnerships this year as well. The Neuro-Imaging/Visual Impairment (NIVI) project continues its analysis of the MRIs completed last year and has begun to develop articles for publication. The relationship with Dr. John Phillips, pediatric neurologist on the NIVI project, promises to continue as he supports the development of the ECP staff's understanding of neurological visual impairment. At the same time, Early Childhood Program staff have an opportunity to "give back" as they prepare to share their experiences about transdisciplinary teamwork with related services staff from foreign countries. Additionally, the Birth-3 Program is participating in the University of Northern Colorado's nationally-funded feeding study. Classroom staff has participated in the action research and piloted projects with the American Printing House (APH); these projects support the development of adapted materials for the blind.
- **Supporters:** Some of NMSBVI's most treasured partnerships come from individuals and groups who share the vision for improving services for the blind throughout the state. There are VI contractors who work in multiple districts whose passion and commitment to their students and to the field results in outstanding services. The National Federation of the Blind, the Commission for the Blind, as well as public school districts throughout the state have engaged in dialogue, worked with the school to promote change, and have been strong supporters of our united efforts to integrate services seamlessly for our students.

Helen Keller stated, "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." NMSBVI is grateful for the strength of every partnership we enjoy. As a school, we recognize that it is only when our voices unite that we create the beautiful symphony of supportive systems that will help our students grow. As this year draws to a close, NMSBVI thanks each of its partners.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."  
~Margaret Meade*



# Program Updates

## New Mexico State University's Visual Impairment Program (VIP)

**Loana Mason, Ed.D., COMS,**  
**Visual Impairment Program Director**

The VIP welcomed 13 new blindness and visual impairment specialists into the profession this year (eight teachers of students with visual impairments [TSVIs], three developmental vision specialists [DVSs], one certified orientation and mobility specialist [COMS], and one special education administrator). Three recent COMS graduates also passed the rigorous national mobility exam, and one TSVI graduate received an outstanding teaching award from NMSU's Special Education Program! Seventeen new students (nine COMSs and eight TSVIs) have been admitted so far into the 2017 cohort. This is our largest COMS cohort ever and includes two out-of-state students plus one international student. Thirteen students from the 2015 cohort are still completing their programs of study, nine of whom are pursuing a Master of Arts in Special Education. Mentors supplied through NMSBVI's Outreach Services supported 11 TSVI interns in five public school districts and at NMSBVI. Two private contractors also mentored three COMS interns in three different public school districts and at the New Mexico Commission for the Blind. The VIP continues to touch the lives of children with visual impairments one TSVI, COMS, or DVS at a time.



## Low Vision Clinic

**Marjorie Rhodes, Low Vision Clinic Consultant**

Good things are happening in the Low Vision Clinic! Sixty-four students were seen in the low vision clinic during the 2016-17 school year. Thirty five new students attended with 29 students returning for follow-up visits. Clinics were held in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Gallup, Roswell, and Las Cruces. Overall, students from 20 different districts (plus students from NMSBVI programs) from around the state were able to benefit from this low vision service. The clinic doctors work hard to provide for each student's particular needs. It is a rewarding experience to see how the exam changes as a young student matures, and hear the excitement of questions answered and help received.



The following is from a TVI: "The low vision clinic was monumental for my student and her parents. The parents had been told their daughter did not have the ability to see, besides light perception. And therefore, had always been treated as a student with no vision. When the student came to me, I quickly noticed that she used her vision quite a bit and was able to identify shapes,



objects, and some colors. Both parents attended the low vision clinic, where the doctor worked with her identifying shapes, colors, and her ability to see contrast. The doctor was able to tell the parents that she does have vision, low vision, but that she would like to continue seeing her in the future. The parents were incredibly thankful and grateful to hear from a doctor for the FIRST time that their 8 year old daughter in fact did have some usable vision. Tears were shed and there is a video of the entire appointment that the mother was very excited to show the family!"

## The Global Read Aloud and NMSBVI

**Donelle Bunch, Language Arts Instructor**

The Global Read Aloud was created in Denmark in 2010 with a simple goal in mind: one book to connect the world. From its humble beginnings, the Global Read Aloud has grown to make a truly global connection with more than 2,000,000 students having participated.

Last year, students in our Language Arts classes participated in the Global Read Aloud from early October, 2016 to the end of 1st semester. Here's how it works.... Teachers from around the world use social networking to sign up and read a common book on a set schedule. Our students then communicate about the book via whatever social medium the teachers choose. Our 6th-8th graders and one 10th grader read a book called Pax; for this book, our partner class was in Toronto, Ontario at a private school called Montcrest Academy. The class in Canada had eight 6th graders. Our 10th and 11th grade boys read a book called All American Boys; and our partner class for this book was in Rockingham, Virginia at Broadway High School. We created several projects with them, including video presentations and a group presentation online. We also had a Skype discussion with the class at Broadway High School about the book.



## First-Annual Innovations Fair

**Linda Lyle, Retired Superintendent**

On April 26th at the ECP in Albuquerque and on April 28th at the residential campus in Alamogordo, NMSBVI held its first annual Innovations Fair. A direct result of the department's strategic plan, the goal of the event was to showcase the remarkable, creative work of its staff. Set up similarly to a science fair, staff shared information about twenty-seven different initiatives at the school. The displays ranged from an update on current and planned capital projects on the Alamogordo campus... to a Language Arts teacher who has opened the world to her students through book sharing discussions with a class in Canada.

One popular display was hosted by Datha Peters, NMSBVI Life Skills instructor, who shared three-dimensional





games that were developed by Life Skills staff and are used as part of instruction to help students learn the complexity of adult independence and decision-making. The ECP staff shared early results from their Neuro Imaging Vision Impairment (NIVI) research project as well as early Braille literacy strategies and ideas related to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for young children. Low Vision Clinic adaptations highlighted the increased information that is available to families when educators and doctors are able to work together. The Infant Toddler Program reminded those attending the Fair that abuse continues to break families apart and to cause irreparable damage to our children. They also demonstrated the value of reflective supervision as well as the many ways videotaping can be used to document progress in a child and to provide a venue for collaborating and reflecting on one's work.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the Fair occurred in the thinking of participants who visited the displays. Many expressed amazement at the breadth of the school and its involvement in developing strategies and products in the field of blindness education. For many staff, though, it triggered ideas; helped them realize that they, too, had something unique to offer to the field; and perhaps even planted a spark to motivate them to be ready to participate in next year's event!

## Assistive Technology/Lending Library

**Cheryl Petree and Fatima Portugal, Assistive Technology Consultants**

As a part of NMSBVI's Outreach services, we serve 28 districts throughout the state. We work in conjunction with classroom teachers, teachers of students with visual impairments, school technology specialists, special education coordinators, and parents to identify specific assistive technology devices, software, and applications that would be appropriate for their students or children to access classroom materials. Assistive technology evaluations are conducted to assess students' needs, and we loan devices to students to test out for a trial period to see if they meet their needs before districts purchase them. Then we train members of the student's educational team in necessary assistive technology skills. These skills may include learning how to use a tablet to magnify images or read textbooks using a text-to-speech feature or learning how to use a Bluetooth switch with an iPad to activate a cause and effect app. Skills can also include learning how to use a braille notetaker to write essays or learning how to use a screen reader to conduct online research. We also work closely with the Low Vision Clinic to identify new students in need of an assistive technology evaluation or devices, and to follow up with students who may need new or alternative devices or software that is more appropriate in their current educational environment. This year, we conducted a statewide training for educators and rehabilitation professionals working in the field of blindness at NMAER's conference, to cover the wide variety of devices available to students. Upcoming trainings on more specific skills are being planned.



## Blindness Awareness Training

*Mark Carter, Michelle Chacon, & Loana Mason*

Mark Carter was tasked with re-designing Blindness Awareness Training, which typically relies heavily on simulation activities. Such simulations often make sighted people erroneously believe that being blind is difficult simply because they do not know how to use appropriate compensatory techniques. Thus, he felt it was important to include blind adults in the training so that staff could benefit from their first-hand experiences and develop high expectations for students in the long-term.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, approximately 140 NMSBVI employees participated in Blindness Awareness Training. Instead of doing campus-wide trainings, Mark, Michelle, and Loana have been tailoring the trainings to individual departments. For example, transportation staff practiced basic travel skills (including entering and exiting vehicles), dorm staff practiced living skills (including making beds, folding/hanging laundry, and grilling/cutting/baking), staff at the Early Childhood Program practiced task analysis and route planning, and education staff analyzed videos of poorly executed compensatory techniques. These trainings are intended to be on-going and to address current issues as beliefs and expectations are constantly evolving.

Adelmo Vigil (president of the NM chapter of the National Federation of the Blind) joined Michelle, Loana and Mark in a blindness awareness training for US Forest Service Southwestern Region Public Affairs Officers. In addition, Kathleen Chinn (professor emeritus of deaf education), Brenda Holmes, Loana Mason, Carolyn Delone, and Mark Carter provided deafblindness awareness training to students from the Canutillo Texas School District. Given the critical importance of positive attitudes about blindness, it was nice to see these trainings extend beyond just the staff on the NMSBVI residential campus.



## Awareness Program to Stop Child Abuse in New Mexico: Non Accidental Trauma (Shaken Baby)

*Cindy Faris, Infant-Toddler Program Coordinator*

NMSBVI has had a long history of collaborating with communities around New Mexico to care for the children who are blind or visually impaired as a result of non-accidental trauma (Shaken Baby). Our staff has worked with children, biological and foster parents, CYFD, and other agencies to do what we can to support the children and families who are in the system due to non-accidental trauma. Our staff who have worked in the hospitals, homes, and schools with the children have been forever touched and affected by this senseless violence which changes the



lives of children and families forever.

We have collaborated with a number of groups to try to prevent non-accidental trauma. We partnered with NMCAPP (New Mexico Child Abuse Prevention Program) to create a documentary about child abuse in NM, and have also created a video with the UNM Hospital education program to help educate new parents about shaken baby; UNMH helped to pass a resolution in 2017 through the NM legislature to require that all hospitals in NM provide information to new parents about this danger to children. Additionally, NMCAPP is currently developing an educational program on the prevention of child abuse for community programs.

The Las Cruces Community Foundation has given NMSBVI a \$5,000 grant for Shaken Baby prevention in New Mexico. We have been updating English and Spanish materials and have created a new car magnet to help increase community awareness. UNMH has collaborated with us on the content of the materials and on using their website with a video about shaken baby prevention. We will be sharing this information at the FIT annual meeting as well as with agencies around New Mexico. We will also be speaking at the board meeting of the Las Cruces Community Foundation in September, 2017, to report on our efforts and to provide a report of activities related to the grant.

## NMAER Update

### *Linda Lyle, NMSBVI Retired Superintendent*

The New Mexico Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind (NMAER) has an ongoing mission to support professionals who provide educational and rehabilitation services to students who are blind/visually impaired. Conferences, training and opportunities to network have long been hallmarks of AER. In recent years, NMAER had become dormant in the state, and a rich history of educational/training opportunities for the state's educators was in danger of being lost. New Mexico educators called for the return of AER to New Mexico as a way to come together around the current issues in education as well as to, once again, have an opportunity to stay current in their educational practices.



In answer to that call, NMSBVI agreed to sponsor a conference in FY17. School personnel assumed the leadership responsibilities of the organization; the tireless work of Luanne Stordahl (developmental specialist for NMSBVI) resulted in New Mexico's return to good standing status with the national AER organization. As a result, NMAER was able to host a conference in February that was attended by more than 200 educators and related services providers. The event's theme, "Better Together," focused on strengthening the partnerships that will lead to further collaboration, growth, and, of course, many future conferences. Welcome back, AER!



## NMVI Count Database

**Mary Vaughn, Instructional Resource Center Coordinator**

The new NMVI Count database is finally here! NMSBVI strives to support students throughout New Mexico in a number of ways. Students are eligible for registration in the Federal Quota Program through the American Printing House for the Blind. Districts ensure that their students meet certain requirements and then register them through the NMSBVI Instructional Resource Center. Once a student is registered, the district has access to APH resources including Braille and large print textbooks, as well as other specialized equipment used by students with visual impairments. If they don't qualify for APH, students still have access to materials because they are covered through provisions under IDEA; they are registered through the Supplemental registry.



NMVI Count is going to be a more efficient way for schools to register their students for the APH or Supplemental registry. The database is a user-friendly tool that will not only allow districts to register their students, but it is also a tool that can generate reports when pinpointing specific information. For example, NMSBVI can look at how many Braille readers there are in 7th grade in the state. Data like this can assist in making decisions regarding what resources to order and what kind of support can be offered. NMVI Count is being introduced to districts through the summer camps taking place throughout the state. This has allowed us to make necessary adjustments so that it is effectively up and running at the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

## New Perspectives on Cerebral Visual Impairment

**Mark Carter, COMS, NMSU Adjunct Instructor, Personnel Prep Program**

Within the last school year, staff at NMSBVI have been involved in a number of initiatives, projects, and activities with the central goal of providing quality educational services to students with Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI). CVI is the most commonly diagnosed eye condition of NMSBVI students. The Neuroimaging and Visual Improvement (NIVI) project, which is being conducted by NMSBVI in partnership with the M.I.N.D. Research Network at UNM, seeks to determine if there is a way to use brain scanning technology to guide educational programming for students with CVI.



Two recent conferences – the New Mexico Association for Education & Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NM AER) conference, held in Albuquerque in February of 2017; and the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) which was co-planned by NMSBVI staff and held in Scottsdale, AZ in June of 2017 – both had a strong CVI focus with internationally-known presenters sharing the latest research and approaches on working with children with CVI.



At the NMSBVI Preschool, the use of individual student Vision Maps are used to track the student's functional visual fields. Visual field losses are frequently associated with a CVI diagnosis. The Vision Maps are used to ensure that staff interacting with the preschool students are aware of the intact visual fields as well as areas of the visual field that may be deficit.

In order to stay up-to-date on the latest thinking about CVI, teachers on the Alamogordo NMSBVI campus participated in Learning Circle meetings which included in-depth discussions based on individual chapters from the recently published book, *Vision and the Brain: Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*, edited by Amanda Hall Lueck, Ph.D., and Gordon Dutton, M.D. NMSBVI teachers in Alamogordo have recently begun using an evaluation for students with CVI which was developed Dr. Dutton.

## ECC Across the Age Span

### *ECC for Birth-to-Three ~ by Luanne Stordahl, Developmental Specialist*

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is a curriculum of skills that are taught to students with visual impairments in addition to their regular core curriculum of language arts, science, math and social studies. These are skills that are often learned incidentally by people with typical vision, but need to be specifically taught to people with visual impairments. The ECC consists of these areas: Compensatory, Orientation & Mobility, Sensory Efficiency, Social Skills, Career Skills, Independent Living, Recreation & Leisure, and Self-Determination.



The NMSBVI birth-to-three staff wants to ensure that instruction in the ECC begins as early as possible so that parents and caregivers know what can be done at home to help their child learn about the world around them. Our philosophy is that children learn best within daily routines in their natural environments. We work with parents to incorporate the ECC curriculum within their child's daily routine using familiar objects, toys and people. Parents are given information about the ECC and specific ideas of how to encourage their child's learning and growth. Families are encouraged to get their children out into the community and to participate fully in all family routines and activities. Our hope is that by learning about the ECC early, children will have the opportunity to grow up in an experience-rich environment that lasts a lifetime.

### *ECC in the Preschool Years ~ by Patty Beecher, Superintendent*

At the NMSBVI Early Childhood Program, emphasis is placed on the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The ECC refers to a set of concepts and skills that students with visual impairments or blindness need to be directly taught due to their decreased ability to learn incidentally by observing others. The ECC includes nine areas: Assistive Technology, Career Education, Compensatory Skills, Independent Living Skills,



Orientation and Mobility, Recreation and Leisure, Self-Determination, Sensory Efficiency, and Social Interaction. We begin to use the language of the ECC immediately with the families and students. It is important that families and students understand that the ECC is something that should be addressed throughout the students' educational careers. The lessons taught through the ECC will look different as the students grow and face more complex challenges.



At the ECP, we embed the ECC instruction throughout the school day. The classrooms are set up to promote independence. For example, classroom staff are trained to allow the students to succeed on their own, fading any necessary support. The staff capitalize on opportunities to teach social skills while the students are on the playground, while they are in the special playhouses, and during self-selection times within the class. We expose the students to various types of technology, including iPads and low vision devices. We support orientation and mobility concepts and techniques during academic lessons, community-based instruction, and movement within and around the school. The ECP report cards include a section on the ECC as a way to track each student's progress and to keep the conversation about the ECC at the forefront.

### ***ECC for School-Age Students ~ by Datha Peters, Life Skills Instructor***

We found placement for 12 students in on-campus jobs this year and helped them with their job skills. Three students held jobs off campus and generated some income from their employment. Students updated their employment portfolios, which will be given to them at the end of their time at NMSBVI; they are updated at the beginning of every school year, and seniors update their information as they graduate.



Students spent a lot of time in the kitchen this year learning how to prepare a variety of meals. They did a wonderful job preparing and serving at the Holiday Sampler event. Students over 14 years old were able to participate in the apartment or cottage experience. Most students found it to be very rewarding to learn how to live on their own and take care of themselves physically & emotionally. Michelle Chacon came in to the Life Skills class and helped students with kitchen skills but more importantly, with social skills and orientation & mobility skills. Students came away with more independence and confidence after meeting and working with Michelle.

The students engaged in a Life's Journey game this year; every month they had to move a piece around a game board, and vicariously experienced various life events which cause people to gain or lose money.



It was an eye-opening experience for the students as they learned things they never knew before. Many were surprised at how much everyday activities cost. At the end of the year, students had to total their game-budgets, at which point most students realized they were broke in the game after they had paid back their imaginary loans.

Many NMSBVI teachers collaborate with each other to help students with particular skills in each of their classrooms. Students may be working on the same basic skill in 2 or 3 classrooms, just in a different way; which can better enable students to learn new skills. These skills might include communication, socialization, etc.... It is amazing how much the students learn when everyone is working on things as a team!



## Proud Recipient, yet again!

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL



***NMSBVI: #1 Midsize Company  
in the State of New Mexico!***

*What NMSBVI employees say:*

“I am vested in the mission of the school. It is *very rewarding* to work at NMSBVI.”

“I get to see the children that I work with *grow & learn* each day...  
And they also teach me.”

“I feel that I *make a difference* in the children’s lives.”

“I get to *help students* learn & gain confidence.”

*“The kids are amazing.”*



# Demographics *(Fiscal Year 2017)*

## **Birth-to-3 (also called Family, Infant, Toddler Program or FIT)**

- 1,425 children have been screened.
- 1,026 new referrals.
- 517 children served to date (*total number of children served to date = current month's active caseloads' total plus total number of children discharged to date from July 2016 to present.*)

## **Early Childhood Program (ECP/Albuquerque campus)**

- 62 students were enrolled during the school year.
- School districts included: Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, San Felipe, Estancia, and Los Lunas.

## **Residential Campus (Alamogordo campus)**

- 40 students were enrolled during the school year.
- 14 additional students received itinerant/consult services.
- 3 additional students received short-term placement.

## **Outreach Department**

- Assistive Technology served 78 students across 28 districts and performed 10 formal AT assessments.
- Mentored 10 interns in 5 districts and NMSBVI.
- Direct services to 2 districts for 4 students & did consultative services for 8 students in the Alamogordo & Tularosa Districts. Provided direct services for 5 Albuquerque Public Schools pre-school students.
- Held 4 learning circles in the southern part of the state with attendance ranging from 8 to 11 participants.

## **Vision Impairment Program**

- 9 TSVIs (Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments); 4 DVs (Developmental Vision Specialists); 3 COMS (Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists); and 1 student simultaneously enrolled in both the TSVI & COMS programs.
- Interns were spread across 7 different districts (including NMSBVI.)
- In May 2017, a cohort of 8 TSVIs and 7 COMSs joined the NMSU VIP, representing 3 previously unaccounted-for districts.

## **Instructional Resource Center (IRC)**

- Provides adapted materials to any student in NM who is registered with the IRC.
- 1,698 items were checked out.
- Provided materials to 33 districts in NM.

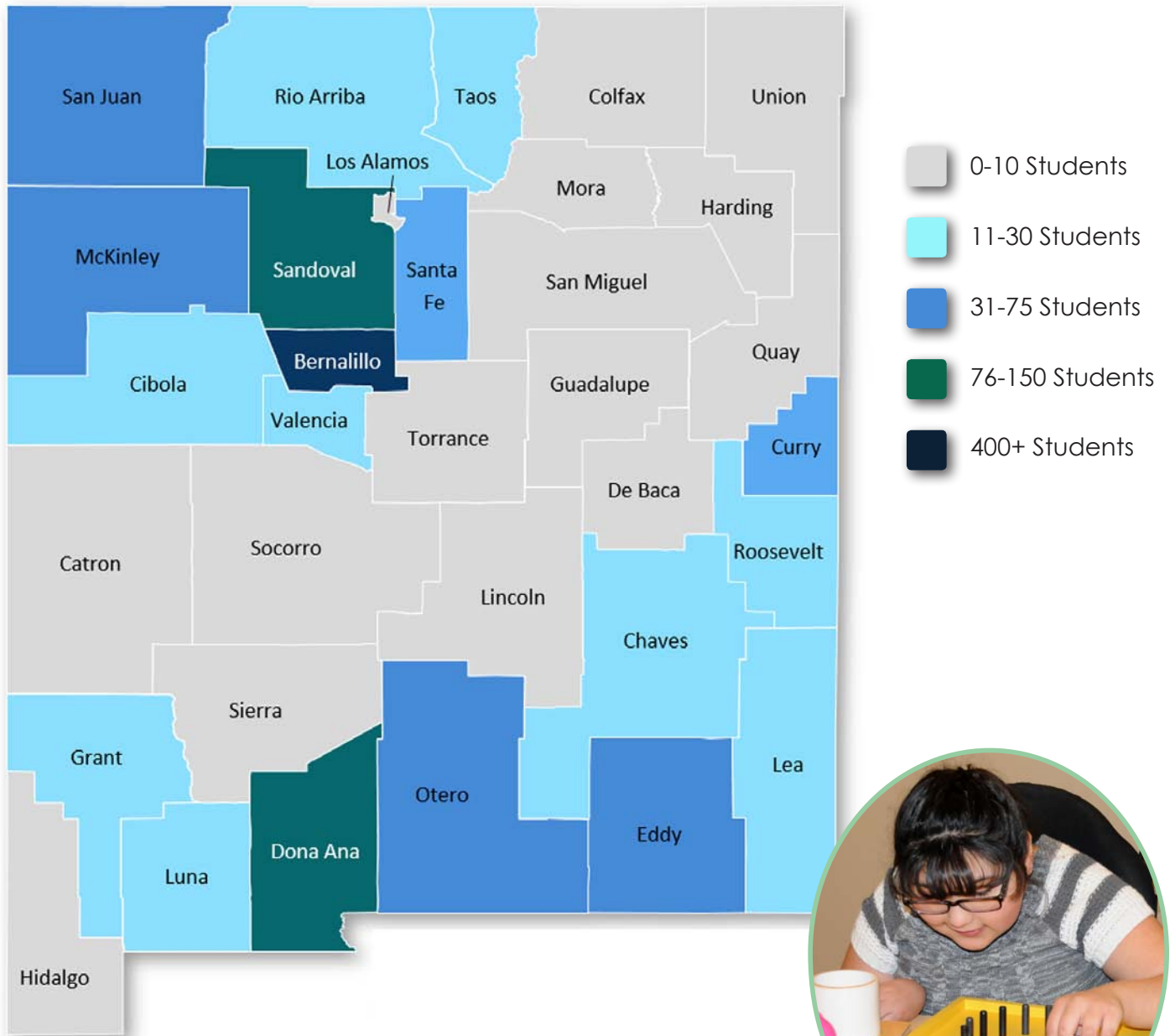
## **Low Vision Clinic**

- 8 clinics held in 5 different locations throughout the state.
- 64 students seen in Fiscal Year 2017.
- 20+ districts represented, not including NMSBVI.

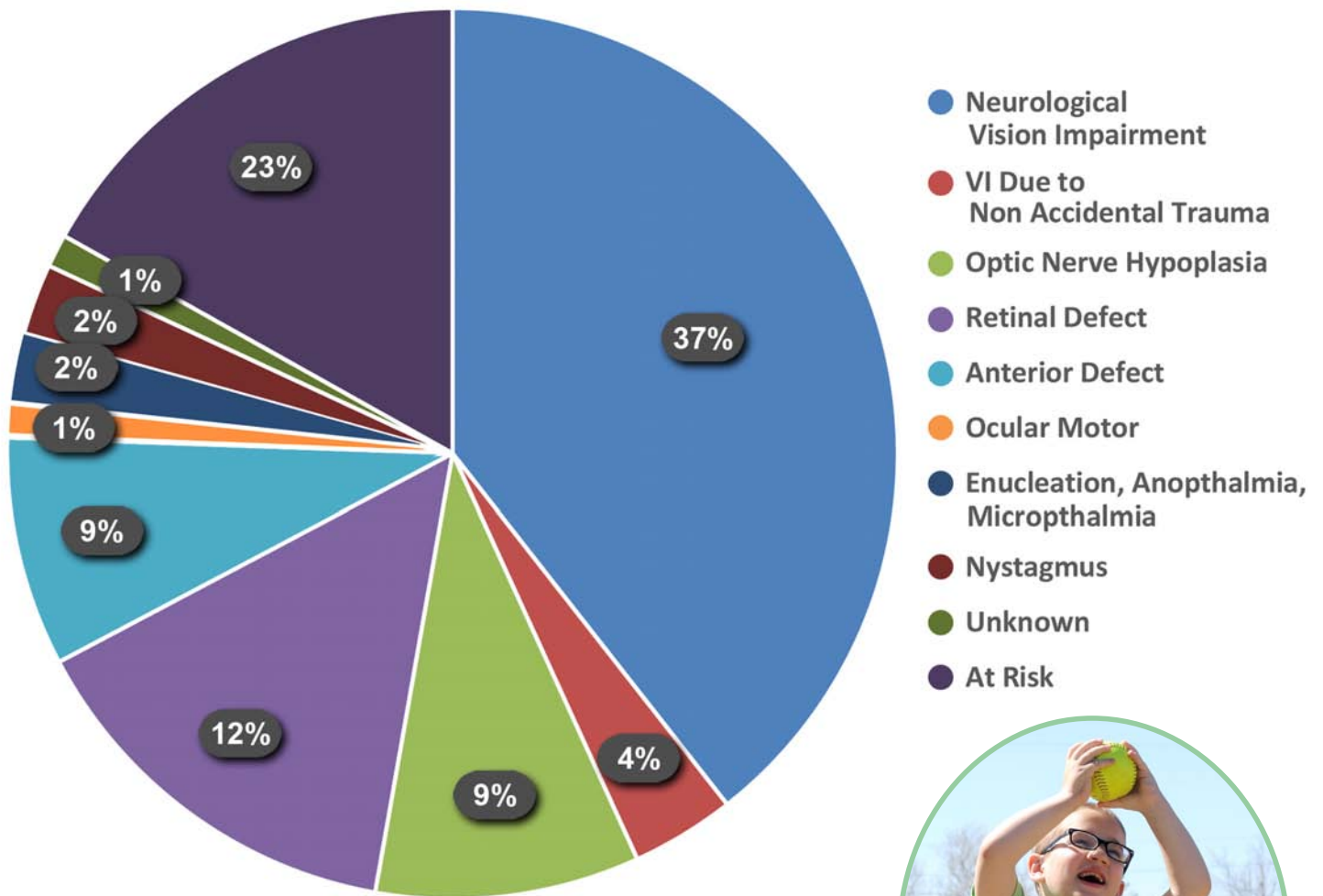




# Children Served, by County ~ 2016 – 2017 School Year



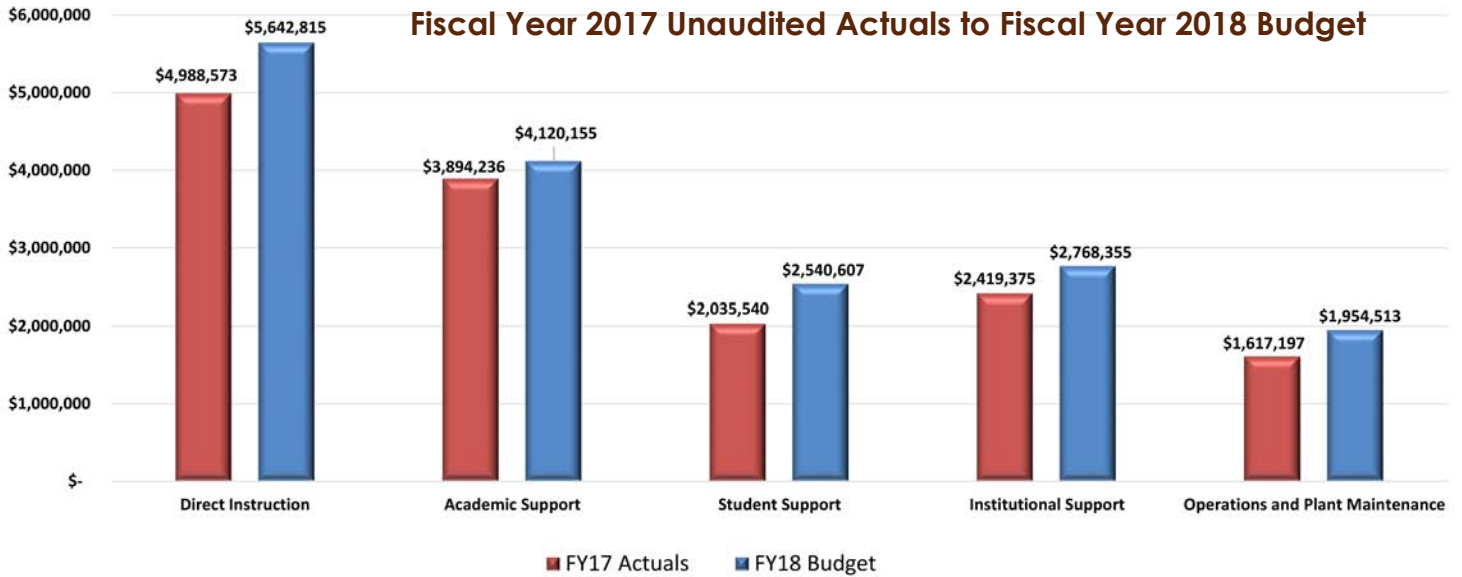
# Statewide Vision Diagnoses ~ July 2017



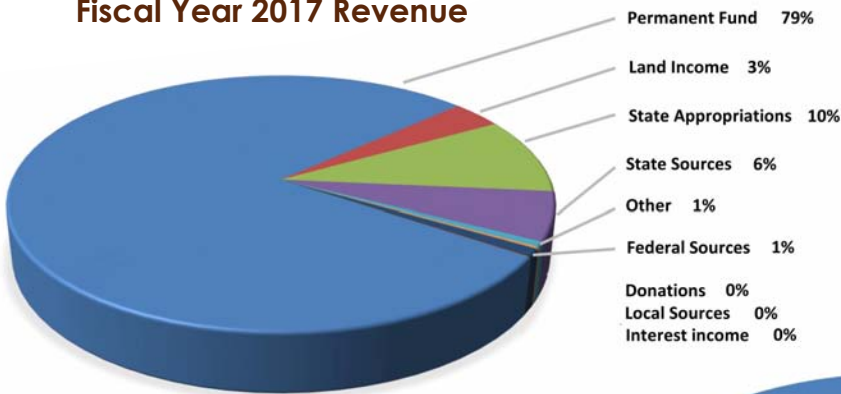
Total Number of Students = **1,167**



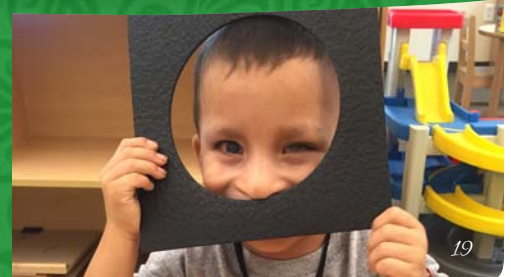
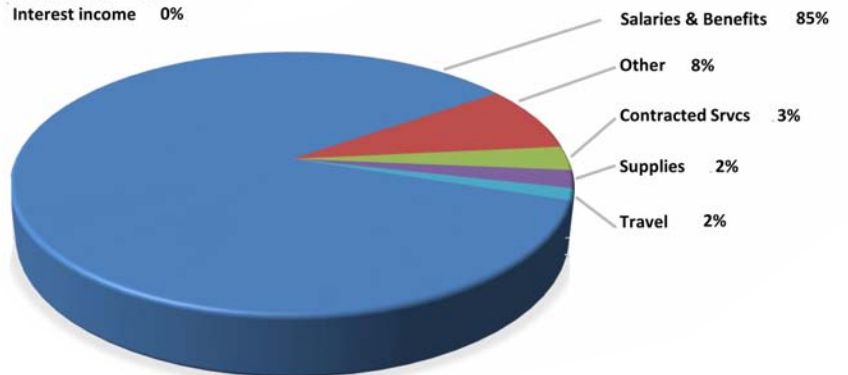
# Financials



### Fiscal Year 2017 Revenue



### Fiscal Year 2017 Expenses



# Capital Improvements on the Alamogordo Campus

**Margie Macias, Director of Institutional Support Services**

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired continues with major capital improvements. Most recently, improvements include the former Health Services Building (a historical building on the State and National Historical Registers), repurposed as the new school library location. The new library is now more centrally located on the 35 acre campus and is only steps away from the Watkins Education Center and the Quimby Gymnasium & Natatorium. The interior walls of the building were gutted and renovated into an open-space area. Beautiful new windows and a new handicap ramp were also installed.

The students are now comfortably settled in their new and beautiful library complete with books (regular print, large print, Braille), tactile wall hangings and table gadgets, a cozy reading corner, and touchable wild-life taxidermy animals for sensory learning.



This project also included renovating and repurposing the southwest corridor of the Jack Hall Building into a new Health Services Suite. The suite includes a nurse's station, treatment room, an office, training room, and two hospital-like rest and care rooms (one with an observation window from the nurse's station).

Not long after the completion of the library and health services suite in the Fall of 2016, construction fences started going up at a different zone of the campus. Once again, NMSBVI was gearing up for the next two projects to begin and a new contractor to mobilize on the campus.

As part of the two newest projects, the former education building (originally known as the Watkins Education Center), the Ditzler Auditorium/Recreation Center building, and the Central Receiving Building are presently undergoing upgrades and renovations. The Ditzler Auditorium and the Central Receiving Building are both also on the State and National Historic Registers.

Since the construction of the new Watkins Education Center in 2013, the old education building is being repurposed to serve the school as the administration building and the "gateway to the campus". The two-story, soundly-built (circa 1945) and architecturally-pleasing building will house the Superintendent's office, conference rooms, Business/Finance offices, Human Resources, Capital Projects, Information Systems & Technology (IS&T), the Outreach Department and the NMSU Personnel Preparation Program, complete with a large training room and offices. In April, the NMSBVI Board of Regents approved a staff-wide recommendation to name this building the Linda Lyle Administration Building in honor of Superintendent Lyle who retired at the end of the 2017 school year.

The Ditzler Auditorium and Recreation Center are undergoing extensive renovations that will also include upgrades and improvements to the school's four-lane bowling alley. Minor renovations to the former Central Receiving Building are being done



in order to house staff from the Instructional Resource Center (IRC). The Braille Production staff will move into the Paul & Lois Tapia Building vacated by the IS&T staff.

As part of these two ongoing projects, demolition of the San Andres Administration Building and the Bert Reeves Learning Center will occur.

The “beep....beep....beep” sounds of the large excavators, front loaders and dirt movers, men working high on a roof, big construction trucks with tires bigger than most of our students, the hard hats and bright yellow, orange and green vests continue to be a part of the school's décor for, at least, the next three years and three more projects.

*Shown here: renovation of the old education building; Ditzler auditorium exterior and interior; the IRC's new space; and new Health Services offices.*



# The Foundation (NMSBVIF)

## Glowball Comes to Albuquerque... and Returns to Alamogordo

*Herb Wright, Foundation Director*

Coming off the tails of a successful Glowball Tournament in Alamogordo, The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Foundation held its first Albuquerque Glowball event on September 24th. Chaired by Foundation Director Stuart Butzier, the nighttime golf tournament took place at the Los Altos Golf Course, just down the street from the ECP campus. The event began with a 4pm shotgun start on the front nine holes, and as golfers finished the daylight portion, they gathered at the clubhouse for dinner, a silent / live auction and a raffle drawing. Starting around 8pm, golfers returned to the course where they played the back nine holes in almost complete darkness. Some golfers lit their golf carts with glow sticks and themselves with glowing necklaces, LED lights and reflectors. You could see the players and their carts from a mile away, but being a beacon of light in the night wouldn't help navigate the cart paths. It was quickly apparent that flashlights were mandatory, and what few the Foundation had on-hand were quickly put to good use. Coming off the 9th hole, all players were given the opportunity to putt in a "Shot in the Dark" putting contest. Because the prize was so valuable, many players purchased tickets to take additional putts.

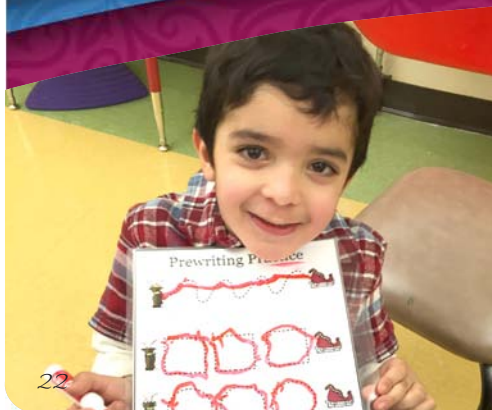
On April Fool's Day (no kidding), the school held its second annual Glowball tournament in Alamogordo. Once word was out, the course filled up with players and the event doubled its net proceeds from those of the previous year.

Overall, both events raised a combined total of nearly \$30,000 for the Superintendent's Fund! The NMSBVI Foundation wants to thank our Alamogordo Sponsors: Desert Sun Motors – Title Sponsor; Si Senior, Legacy Financial, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Back in Action Therapy, and Senior Relocation Services – Event Sponsors; Anna & Victor Allee, Boss Consulting – Putting Contest Sponsors; 1st National Bank, Shamrock Foods, Pizza Patio, General Hydronics, and Kriegel, Gray, Shaw & Co. P.C. CPA's – Tee/Hole Sponsors. And our Albuquerque Sponsors: Modrall, Sperling, Rohel, Harris & Sisk P.A. – Event Sponsor; Rodey, Dickason, Sloan, Akin & Robb P.A. – Birdie Sponsor; Family Eye Care/Children's Eye Center of New Mexico – Drink Cart Sponsor; Senior Relocation Services, Brian S. Colon, High Desert Investment Advisors, LLC, Dick and Iris Bracket, G & S Enterprises, Alaskan Desert Seafood, Zia Trust, and Rio Grande Financial Network – Tee/Hole Sponsors.

For fiscal year 2017/2018, the Glowball tournaments are scheduled for September 23 in Albuquerque and April 7 (tentative) in Alamogordo.

### NMSBVI Foundation Board of Directors 2016-2017 Fiscal Year

- Agnes Vallejos, President
- Remick Ham, President
- Stuart Butzier, Vice President
- Jeff Croasdell, Treasurer
- Cathy Gray
- CJ Yousif
- Brenda Yousif
- Phil Stevens
- Michelle Croasdell
- Siobhan Mitchell
- Anna Allee
- Linda Lyle



# Saying Goodbye

## Graduating Seniors, Class of 2017

- Zackery Dale Jones
- Lawrence Jose Perez

**Class Colors:** Royal Blue & Green

**Class Song:** "True Colors" by Glee

**Class Flower:** Yellow Tulips

**Class Motto:** You can achieve anything  
you set your mind to.



## ECP Program Graduates

*(Early Childhood Program / Albuquerque)*

- Miles Barone
- Collins Barrett-Torres
- Zade Chavez
- Ronnie Cotinola
- Benito Garcia
- Kylee Goolsby
- Chyara Jupiter
- Xavier Lay
- Isabela Leyva
- Aubreeana Lucero
- Isaiah Martin-Haywood
- Neveah Mauricio
- Diego Morales
- Javien Priddy
- Adamaris Vazquez-Aguero



## NMSBVI Retirees

- **Melannie Bartolome**  
Housekeeper
- **Lin Coachman**  
Developmental Specialist
- **Kathy Danley**  
Instructional Resource Center,  
Materials Specialist
- **Rose Gallegos**  
Education Assistant
- **Linda Lyle**  
Superintendent



To request a copy of this publication in Braille,  
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