

September 2020 Newsletter



With coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reducing across the state, I remain hopeful that Victoria is regaining control over the spread of the virus. Thanks to everyone's hard work, vigilance and physical distancing, we are seeing positive signs and we hope this continues over the next few months. BSRV continues to provide sporting activities to individuals, and although not face to face, we have had great success with our on-line zoom programs.

We look forward to restrictions easing in coming months where we can once again resume our sporting and recreational opportunities.

Maurice Gleeson OAM
President

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In-Home Health & Wellness Programs

BSRV is pleased to offer a range of in-home health and wellness programs each week, to keep you active, fit and make connection with others during COVID-19 restrictions. We understand that the current social distancing guidelines can make it difficult for you to remain physically active and connected.

These new programs have been developed to offer a safe and convenient alternative, which can be conducted within your own home. This trial program is being conducted by BSRV Program Coordinator, Sandra Knight – using the Zoom video/audio conference program.

Participants can either join in via landline, mobile or their computer and the range of activities on offer include: - Full body fitness - Virtual Morning Teas - an intermediate level yoga class (note: as the yoga class is currently at capacity, this is a wait list only option) The fitness program involves listening to an exercise session on YouTube, while BSRV's Program Coordinator provides verbal explanations about some of the moves involved. Our Program Coordinator will also verbally describe some of the moves prior to the YouTube video commencing. BSRV can offer you

advice and support in the use of Zoom video/audio conferencing to facilitate your involvement in these programs.

The programs are proving extremely popular and we now have 36 people taking part in the various activities, including people living in other states of Australia. Furthermore, participants are gaining more than just fitness from these programs, as the quotes below suggest:

"The Walking / Exercise program run by BSRV has been terrific for me: as the isolation has been a massive contrast with my normal busy life. 'Zoom' on the house phone, speaker on, it can be done in any convenient part of the house. A few minutes of catch-up with friends, then off we go! We all feel quite proud of our 3-mile walks! All done with Heart Health in mind. I feel sure this has smartened up my brain as well as my muscles, and I applaud & thank Sandra & BSRV".

"In this very strange time of lock down I am immensely grateful for Blind Sports Victoria and Sandra who is the Program Coordinator, for providing the opportunity to participate in the Zoom walking exercise program.

I am now blind, I had to cease driving a car 20 years ago because of my failing vision and

my husband died recently so I now live alone.

Blindness is incredibly isolating; one's lack of eyesight makes a real barrier when interacting with the wider population and the daily exercise sessions have added a real focus to my days during this difficult period. I ring into Zoom using my landline as a video offers no benefit to me. We chat to other people on the phone line at the time as Sandra is setting up the session and welcoming people as they call in. I can only describe it as feeling like I have a group of friends in my lounge room every day for a few minutes. Some people I have met a few times over recent years and some are complete strangers perhaps from regional areas or interstate. The feeling of being part of the session and enjoying the companionship and banter on the phone regularly each morning is just priceless."

We hope these programs provide you with opportunities to keep active, fit and involved during the current COVID-19 restrictions. Everyone is welcome to be involved in the program as much or as little as is wanted by you.

To find out more or register your interest, please contact Sandra Knight, Program Coordinator on Tel: 9822 8876 or email sandra@blindsports.org.au.

Sounds of Africa

by Miriam Bilander



In April this year, our Sounds of Africa Workshop for kids had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and succeeding restrictions. What started out as a great disappointment, slowly turned into a new opportunity for Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria and experienced facilitators, Simon Lewis and Mitzi McRae, from Melbourne Djembe – a creative company specialising in West African drumming and dance.

With a bit of re-working and the help of Zoom Video Communications, this exciting workshop was finally realised on Wednesday the 19th of August. In attendance, were eight energetic children who are blind or have low vision from across Melbourne and regional Victoria, and ranging in age from seven to thirteen years.

The session started with a role call and a show-and-tell of instruments that kids had on-hand in their homes, followed by Simon playing different African instruments, like the Balafon and

Shekere. There was a lot of laughter had after Blake, a vocal participant, exclaimed that the Vibraslap instrument "...sounded like a fart!"

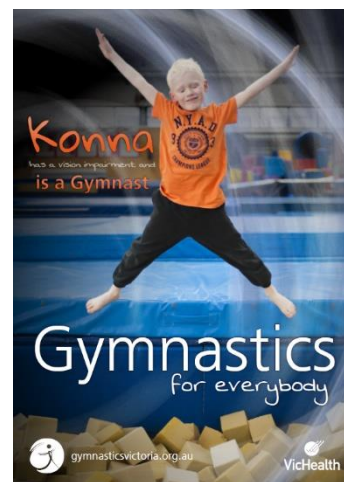
Kids were then taken on an African forest journey through Simon's evocative storytelling and singing, and then invited to let loose and boogie. It was fantastic to see participants, Pheobe and Max, practicing their clapping rhythms, while others, Ethan and Henry, tapped along on their drums at home. One mother expressed how her son, "...worked really hard today with remote learning and needed to have fun!"

The session ended with the children lying down and closing their eyes to the relaxing sounds of the Kora, a West African instrument similar to the harp. Participant Olivia, cleverly recognised the sound of rain in the background from the Rainstick, and Elijah, another participant, wanted to know what the Kora was made of – a hollowed out Calabash Gourd with finely twisted antelope hide. Finally, the workshop ended with question time which quickly turned into a social catch-up for all involved.

The COVID-19 pandemic and current stage four restrictions, has left a lot of children feeling isolated, bored and anxious.

Hearing the unique sounds of Africa, moving one's bodies without judgement, and connecting with peers, was a welcome relief for kids and parents alike. A special thank you to the Victorian Women's Trust for their support, which enabled this workshop to be free for all families.

Gymnastics Classes for Children



[Essendon Keilor Gymnastics Academy](#) in partnership with BSRV have developed a new 'Gym at Home' program for children via Zoom.

Gymnastics helps children to gain confidence, have fun and develop coordination and strength. No special equipment is required and this is a great opportunity for your children to try out gymnastics in their own home.

Limited places are available. For further information, email gymnastics@ekga.com.au or Miriam@blindsports.org.au

Vision Loss Awareness Workshop

Join our free vision loss awareness workshops, which we are offering thanks to funding provided by the NDIA. Limited spaces are available in these 1.5 hour Zoom workshops, which will help you understand more about vision loss and effective strategies to include people who are blind or vision impaired.

Join BSRV Trainer, Anthea Taylor to find out about:

- the most common types of eye conditions and how they impact vision
- how to communicate effectively with people who are blind or vision impaired
- the importance of verbal description and use of tactile senses
- sighted guide principles
- considerations when involving someone who is blind or vision impaired in sport and recreation

Spaces are currently available at the days and times below:

- Mondays 2:00 – 3.30pm
- Tuesdays 4.30 – 6.00pm
- Wednesdays 9.00 – 10.30am
- Thursdays 12 – 1.30pm
- Fridays 2 – 3.30pm
- Saturdays 9 – 10.30am

Be quick to register your interest and find out more! Please contact Anthea Taylor on anthea@blindsports.org.au or by telephone: 9822 8876.

A flashback to earlier this year - 'A ride to remember with Rich and Sue'



Earlier this year, volunteers Rich and Sue participated in the Cadel Evans People's Ride on a tandem over the Great Ocean Road. Sue is vision impaired and was matched with Rich, who is a volunteer with BSRV as they both have a love of bike riding.

Rich said "poor weather on the day meant that everyone did the 64km short course which turned it into a 75km day by the time we rode to and from the start/finish. We actually averaged 32kph which was pretty good. Lots of

people (even the commentators at the start) commented on the tandem and that we were hiking along pretty well. Sue said she loved it because we were involved in the bunches out on the road and the whirl of wheels and gears is quite a buzz. While this was a great start to our year riding together, it was sadly almost our last ride due to Covid restrictions.”

Well done Rich and Sue, a great team effort and we hope you can get back to cycling again soon.

Guide Dogs

Guide Dogs is delighted to launch My Community, My Way - their new online interactive hub where people with low vision and blindness, their family, friends, practitioners, donors, and carers, can find all the information they need from Guide Dogs organisations across the country in the one place.

My Community, My Way (the hub) has been developed in collaboration with Clients and staff from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Guide Dogs SA/NT, Guide Dogs Queensland and Guide Dogs Victoria and is designed to provide support, keep users informed, and connect people with others in their community. You can find news and updates,

links to resources, and links to social events and online programs.

Below, you will find some quick links to articles on the hub that have been trending recently. As a new user, you will be prompted to register the first time you use the hub.

To register

1. By clicking on <https://community.guidedogs.asn.au>

You will be taken to the My Community, My way landing page

2. Listen to the video and hear what the hub has to offer.
3. Click on the ‘Registration’ link and you will be directed to a form where you enter your name and email address, and choose a password.
4. You will be redirected to your profile page where we ask just a few extra questions. Complete these and you are good to go!

Yes, I would like to support Blind Sports & Recreation Victoria

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb _____ P/Code _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please debit my credit card for \$ _____ Visa MasterCard

____ / ____ / ____

Name on card Expiry Date...../.....

Signature

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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