

VisionNews

Newsletter published by the **Vision Education Centre** 339 Bloor St W #215 Toronto M5S 1W7 416-599-9202
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Dear friends,

I am delighted to announce that we now have three new Vision Educators in Ontario! Their names and contact information appear in this newsletter.

I usually do not teach group classes in the summer, but since a number of people have been requesting summer classes, this year I am offering **Introductory** classes and a new series of day-long workshops in **The Art of Seeing Clearly**. See the enclosed schedule and flyer for details. It would be great to see you at one of the classes.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer filled with fun, and lots of opportunities to relax outside and look far, far, into the distance.

My very best wishes to you,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abraham

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“Vision is a process, a dynamic state of doing and being. ‘Doing’ is associated with the rational and logical day-to-day existence of busy-ness and accomplishing tasks. ‘Being’ is the time out, the relaxing, the letting go, the kicking back from the busy-ness of life. Ideally, these two behavioral states interweave to produce a physiological dance that harmonizes our internal organs, muscles, and, most importantly, our nervous system....

Clinical research tells us that the eye responds to most of the physiological processes of the body. The nervous system that warns you to slam on the brakes of your car is routed through your eyes; the sugar processed through your pancreas affects the way you focus; a stimulating landscape modifies the size of your pupils. A larger pupil reflects the fight-or-flight response, and a smaller pupil indicates a relaxed state. Learning as much as possible about visual function can help you make healthy life choices and help you teach your children how to have integrated, powerful, and clear vision as they get older.” From: *The Power Behind Your Eyes* by Robert Michael Kaplan

NUTRITION AND VISION

As we begin the process of improving our vision naturally, it is helpful to look closely at how we are nourishing ourselves. We need foods that are fresh, as close to the natural state as possible, and have a high water content. Gradually changing from the typical North American diet consisting of white bread, pasta, meat, cakes, pastries, soft drinks and coffee, to a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables (organic if possible), whole grains, healthy fats and proteins and lots of pure water, can make a huge difference to the way we feel and the way we see.

But for many of us, it is not easy to change our eating habits. Most of us eat for other reasons than simply to nourish our bodies. We eat because we are bored, feel lonely, upset and in need of comfort, from habit, to fit in with the crowd - you name it! Often the first step is an increase in awareness. Each time we reach for a ‘treat’, or go for something to eat even though we don’t feel hungry, we need to pause for a moment to ask ourselves whether our body needs this food or whether it is serving another purpose.

Sometimes we feel a need for something to eat when we are becoming dehydrated. At times like that a drink of water will take away any craving for food. At other times, what we really need is sleep, or exercise, to talk to someone, or have a hug. Eating habits begin very early in childhood. When we were young and upset, most of us were soothed with a cookie, ice cream, or other sweets. ‘Treats’ were something we knew was not good for us. Yes, we were soothed, but we were also learning habits that stayed with us for a long time. Are we teaching our own children the very habits that we now have to work so hard to escape?

Attempting to remember to choose healthy foods usually works better than trying to deprive ourselves of the foods we love. Then, as we **feel** better, we **want** to eat to maintain our health.

Marc Grossman’s book *Natural Eye Care*, and his website www.visionworksusa.com, are both good sources of information on the nutrients needed by the visual system. If you feel you need supplements, it is a good idea to consult a naturopath

or nutritionist to make sure that the supplements are right for you. If you have any eye disease, it is especially important that you look into nutritional support for your particular condition.

CHILDREN'S VISION

In her book *Do You Really Need Eyeglasses?*, Marilyn Rosanes-Berrett says: 'Readers ask whether children can use the sight training approach presented in this book. My answer is an emphatic yes. One of the most wonderful things about childhood is that change is still relatively easy, even when the child's vision problems seem fairly severe.' She goes on to say: 'In all my work with children, I have found that releasing them from the pressure they feel to achieve - teaching them to relax, comforting them and accepting them as they are - leads to a happier child who is able to achieve more with much less struggle and pain. This growth is beautiful to see.'

Infants begin to focus their eyes about six weeks after birth, but do not achieve sharp focus until they are 18 months old. The visual system is not fully mature until the child is around 7 years old. The visual system of a young child is very changeable, and its healthy functioning depends on many factors.

Jacob Liberman in *Take Off Your Glasses and See*, talks about 'an energy field that appears to surround every human being.' He says that this energy field contracts in response to any stress, and that: 'every time we suppress a perception, impulse, or feeling, our senses are temporarily diminished.' He goes on to say: 'Normally, a child's field will recover as soon as she feels safe again, but many children live in a chronic state of fear or anxiety. Even in an intact and relatively happy family, the emotional pressures on children can easily begin to feel overwhelming. (Think back for a moment to your own childhood.) As adults, we tend to forget just how sensitive children are to the feelings, needs, and expectations of others. Many "normal" children live in a continual state of inner anxiety, although this may not be apparent to those around them.'

When a disturbance appears in our child's vision, it is a good idea to look at what is going on in his life, and in his whole being. It is useful to look at how she is using her eyes, and to help her develop healthy vision habits instead of allowing the poor ones to get entrenched. If you can consult a Vision Educator to help sort out the difficulty from a holistic perspective and help your child move toward healthy functioning of the visual system, that is the best route to follow. I have been fortunate enough to help many children restore their vision. There are several books that can help you too. I recommend you start with: *Help Your Child to Perfect Eyesight Without Glasses* by Janet Goodrich. Her earlier book: *Natural Vision Improvement* also has a section on children's vision.

VISION EDUCATOR TRAINING INSTITUTE

Congratulations to the new graduates of the **Vision Educator Training Institute**! And many thanks to CJ Wilson and Rosemary Gaddum-Gordon, the teachers who came from North Carolina and Maine to co-teach the training course. For information on future trainings, visit our website at www.visioneducators.com.

The new teachers are:

Estelle Saunders, an optometrist from Ottawa who is now also practising holistic vision improvement. She can be reached at 613-823-0414.

Skydancer, who is also studying to be a Feldenkrais teacher and an herbalist. She has started teaching holistic vision improvement near St Clair/Yonge in Toronto, and can be reached at 416-923-3893.

Judy Southon, a project manager who is now also teaching holistic vision improvement. She is in the Sheppard/Yonge area of Toronto and can be reached at 416-226-5939.

FOR SALE

Available from Judy Southon at 416-226-5939:

Needak Rebounders: fabulous for improving circulation in the whole body, and of course, in the visual system as well. These mini-trampolines are of top quality, and guaranteed for 10 years.

Full-Spectrum Lights: The 150 watt bulbs we use for sunning, and full-spectrum fluorescents bulbs. Please call Judy for details on both these products.

Available from the **Vision Education Centre** at 416-599-9202:

Pinhole glasses to relax and exercise your eyes as they help you see more clearly.

VOLUNTEERS

Many thanks to Sandra and Daniel, Nathan, France and Carolyn who very kindly volunteered to help me get this newsletter to you.

USEFUL WEBSITES: www.visioneducators.org, www.seeing.org, and www.visioneducators.com.