

President's Message

Welcome to the 36th. Annual training conference of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), Alabama Chapter. The conference theme this year is "Body, Mind, and Spirit." I am especially excited about this theme because living with a visual impairment not only effects how we will perform a given task or get to and from work or school, but also impacts how we think and feel about ourselves, others, the world around us, and life in general. The theme "Body, Mind, and Spirit," may seem to some unusually broad. However, this theme actually captures the essence of the whole person. Every individual (visually impaired or not) presents an individual combination of these three basic elements. A full examination of individual differences considering these elements will likely result in more desirable outcomes for each one of us.

This year we have an outstanding lineup of speakers and presentations planned. We are honored to welcome Ms. Janie Blome, Executive Director of National AER. Ms. Blome will be our keynote speaker on Thursday morning and will deliver the International Update on Friday at our business meeting. Other speakers and topics include Mr. Barry Elliot on Alabama Sight, Mr. Joey Richey on balance, Ms. Constance Hughes on diet and diabetes, Dr. Mark Swanson on diabetes I and II, Dr. Pam Mobley on ethics in education and rehabilitation, and Debbie Hazelton on living in a body with blindness. As always, we will have exhibitors providing information and demonstration of the latest assistive technology.

We have also included more entertainment and socialization opportunities this year. On Wednesday night anyone who wishes to participate may join our group at Starz Karaoke, a local hot spot just around the corner from the hotel. Of course, singing is not required but is strongly encouraged. On Thursday night, the President's Reception will feature a live band, hors d'oeuvres, and more!

On behalf of the AER, Alabama Chapter Board of Directors, Thank You for attending the 36th Annual Training Conference. As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions as we strive to improve your learning experience each year. If you are not an AER member consider joining, information can be found at <http://alabamaaer.com/Membership.html>. Please take full advantage of all activities and opportunities to gather valuable information, expand your professional network, and spend quality time with colleges and friends.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Sullivan, Ph.D.
President, AER, Alabama Chapter