

# Deaf-Blind Perspectives

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## Deafblind International World Conference on Deafblindness

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Managing Editor

This issue of *Deaf-Blind Perspectives* is devoted to a report on the 13<sup>th</sup> Deafblind International (DbI) World Conference on Deafblindness held last August in Mississauga, Ontario. Deaf-blind people, family members, and professionals came together from all over the world to share their knowledge, experiences, and philosophies and to celebrate the theme of the conference, *Communication is the Key to Opening Doors Worldwide for Persons Who Are Deafblind*. The more than 500 participants from 48 countries had an opportunity to exchange information about research, educational methods and programs, ongoing advocacy efforts at the international level, and the unique experiences of many children and adults who are deaf-blind.

Deafblind International (DbI) began in the 1960s as small group of parents and teachers interested in information about the education of deaf-blind children. Over the years it has expanded into a much broader organization encompassing the interests and needs of all people with deaf-blindness at every stage of life. As part of its many activities, DbI holds a world conference every four years.

This conference demonstrated the range and depth of experience that exists worldwide in the field of deaf-blindness and it emphasized the value of sharing information. Although the presenters and participants, including 70 people from developing regions of the world, came from many different cultures, used a variety of communication methods, and spoke many different languages, it was clear that everyone had much in common.

The conference provided a phenomenal range of opportunities to learn about all aspects of deaf-blindness. There were four plenary presentations, more than 100 workshop sessions, meetings of Deafblind International's topic-specific networks and focus groups, poster sessions, exhibits, and numerous social and art events. The host organization, the Canadian Deafblind and Rubella Association (CDBRA), put all of this together in a very efficient way while at the same time providing an environment that was relaxed and friendly. Thanks to our wonderful volunteer reporters, we are able to report on a sample of these events. The complete conference program is available on the conference web site, <http://www.dbiconferencecanada.com>. The site also contains ordering information for audio- and videotapes that were recorded at the conference. Conference proceedings will be available soon. For more information about DbI visit <http://www.deafblindinternational.org>.

We hope that you enjoy this issue. Sharing information is essential in order to develop and communicate knowledge about deaf-blindness, and *Deaf-Blind Perspectives* is committed to being part of this. If you have questions about anything you read in this issue or want more information about specific topics, contact DB-LINK (800-438-9376, 800-854-7013 TTY, or [dblink@tr.wou.edu](mailto:dblink@tr.wou.edu)).

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