

# The Standard-Bearer

MARCH 2008



**National Accreditation Council**  
for Agencies Serving People with Blindness or Visual Impairment

[www.nacsb.org](http://www.nacsb.org)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1:

**President's Message:  
"The New NAC"**  
R. Tracy Williams, OD

Page 3:

**Executive Director's  
Report, Steven K.  
Hegedeos**

Page 4:

**A Solemn Note**

Page 5:

**2008 NAC Board of  
Directors**

Page 6:

**NAC Reviewer Training**

Page 7:

**The New NAC with  
emphases on:**

Page 8:

**Our Mission**

Page 8:

**Our Audit Report**

## THE NEW NAC

**A Message from the President of the NAC Board,  
R. Tracy Williams, OD**

Greetings to our members, to our colleagues and to our readers! I am proud and excited about the "New NAC's" direction in 2008. I feel very privileged to work along side a talented diverse group of insightful consumers and professional leaders who serve on our board, serve as reviewers and serve as our staff. We have strengthened all aspects of our mission with an attitude of openness; focusing on evidence based standards and attending to details with protocols for comprehensive agency/school reviews. The national NAC Standards are put to use via the best method we can think of namely a peer-review process that promotes cross-pollination of 'best practice' operations.

The "New NAC" is interested in relationships, partnerships, and the sharing of ideas that can practically yet soundly advance the mission to provide the very best services to people of all age groups with vision loss. I truly believe we must and can join together in our field for this purpose. Every agency and school should achieve accreditation by an independent standard setting organization. Please maintain your interests or, if not yet accredited, pursue your opportunity for accreditation. The NAC process revolves around the on-site visit by professionals serving as reviewers who share common challenges and concerns about vision rehabilitation. I encourage all organizations to seek and gain NAC membership thereby helping our leadership improve services in our field. NAC accreditation demonstrates appreciation for transparency, accountability and successful durability.

*continued on page 2*

# THE NEW NAC

## A Message from the President of the NAC Board, R. Tracy Williams, OD

The "New NAC" is now growing in membership, has diverse representation on the Board of Directors and is a partner with other groups including the NEI/NEHEP (National Eye Institute/National Eye Health Education Program). We hope to connect and network with any and all groups that share our desire to help people with vision loss. Together we can establish a unified position on the "importance of standards" in our field and that can lead to far reaching benefits for employment, research, legislation, and funding. Our hope is to initiate changes with expanded partnerships to be more favorable to the best interests of people with vision loss. NAC belongs to the field and has no interest in competing or gaining an advantage over any provider of services. Together we can make needed change happen. Please contact us with your questions, ideas and interests.

**Best regards,**

**R. Tracy Williams, OD**

R. Tracy Williams OD obtained his Doctorate of Optometry from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1979 under the mentorship of Alfred Rosenbloom, O.D. Dr Williams was selected to participate in a low vision rehabilitation externship with Eleanor Faye MD of the NY Lighthouse (now Lighthouse International). After his training he received an appointment as assistant professor at the Illinois College where he served 4 years and was twice honored as "Faculty Member of the Year." Dr Williams served 10 year as the director of the low vision services at the Chicago Lighthouse and received awards for outstanding services.

Dr. Williams is currently the Executive Director of the Deicke Center for Visual Rehabilitation (1986-present) and is a Clinical Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of Low Vision Rehabilitation Services at Loyola University (1998-present).

He is the immediate Past Chairman of the American Optometric Association's Low Vision Rehabilitation Section.

He is also a Co-Chair of the National Eye Institute (NEI)/National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) Low Vision Subcommittee as well as a Governor appointee to the Illinois Blind Services Planning Committee (since 1994)



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

by Steven K. Hegedeos

It is my privilege to serve as executive director of this organization NAC is endowed with expertise, commitment and willingness to devote time and effort by members of the Board of Directors, member organizations and their staffs, peer reviewers in the field and the NAC office staff towards servicing agencies devoted to enhancing the lives of the visually impaired. Thanks to all participating professionals for their contributions, insights and commitment to NAC's mission. While this is NAC's 41st year, in recent years NAC has evolved to what we refer to as the "New NAC."

In the 1960's leaders in the field of vision rehabilitation organized and established the National Accreditation Council (NAC), developed its standards and set up its operations in New York with financial support from national organizations and the US government as detailed in The Comstac Report (Library of Congress catalogue number: 66-28251).

In 2000, NAC commissioned a 5-year Strategic Plan known as the Sterling Group report. The implementation of recommendations in this report resulted in a national meeting, "The Summit of 2002", that led to more diverse representation on the Board of Directors in addition to a comprehensive standards revision process concluding with the publication of our new standards in 2004.

In 2006, NAC committed to operating with a balanced budget and became completely computerized. It continues to operate efficiently with mostly volunteer human resources.

Currently there is an increased interest in NAC as measured by new applicants, such as the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind with its 31 contracting agencies.

The value of NAC's mission is particularly pertinent at this time because of the interest in further defining the required expertise needed to serve people with vision loss as well as increasing recognition of the importance of outcome measures by payers and supporters.

The path for the future is promising as NAC continues to increase its membership while remaining focused on consumer outcomes.

## **The New Strategy for the next five years includes:**

- \* Accomplishing strategic objectives by coupling existing resources with external opportunities and circumstances.
- \* Remaining well informed about conditions in the field regarding new technologies and outcome measurements on which continuous standards updates are based, including maintaining a library of evidence based practices.

*continued on page 4*



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

by **Steven K. Hegedeos**

*continued from page 3*

- \* Recruiting on-site reviewers with a level of expertise that is particularly valuable to organizations and their constituencies.
- \* Partnering with organizations that embrace NAC's mission.
- \* Striving to achieve and sustain, through our representative Board of Directors, a level of recognition in the field that will result in the majority of service providers publicly embracing NAC's unique mission.

Continuous standards up-grades, Medicare issues and building a data bank of 'best practices' based on outcome measures are NAC's leading objectives.

Finally, NAC belongs to the field of vision rehabilitation providers and their constituencies. NAC has no other purpose for its existence than to improve the quality of services to people with vision loss. This mission is accomplished with well vetted national standards applied by experienced peer-professionals in an organized manner. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

**Steven K. Hegedeos,**

NAC Executive Director



## A SOLEMN NOTE

**Adam Gaspar**

**On a personal and sad note, I have to report that Adam my nephew, owner of the building housing the NAC office, as well as the owner of the computer business providing thousands of dollars of free services to NAC has been diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive form of Grade IV malignant brain tumor. Adam Gaspar is 41 years old, he and his wife Ann have six children and we are all hoping for the best outcome for him. He is in treatment here in Cleveland with Johns Hopkins physicians providing consultation.**

**Respectfully, Steven K. Hegedeos**



# 2008 NAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 1, 2008

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Mrs. Marie Amerson</b> Consultant in Field, Georgia	7/01/06 to 6/30/2009	Public
<b><u>NAC Treasurer</u></b>		
<b>Larry Belote</b> LCSW Past-President Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)	Representing BVA	ad hoc
<b>Stephen S. Barrett</b> President Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh	7/1/2007 to 6/31/2010	Member
<b>Denny Bettenhausen</b> , COTA, Executive Director Ensign Skill Center	7/1/2007 to 6/31/2010	Member
<b>Ms. Sheryl Bray</b> Parent, Florida	7/01/06 to 6/30/2009	Consumer
<b>Tara Cortes, RN, PhD</b> President and CEO Lighthouse International	1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010	Public
<b>Paul Edwards</b> Access Services Miami-Dade College	1/1/2003 to 7/01/2009	Consumer
<b>Darla (Saunders) Fowers, RN</b> Death/Blind Services Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind	7/01/06 to 6/30/2009	Public
<b>John Kelly, MEd, COMS</b> AER O&M Division Chair	Representing AER	ad-hoc
<b>Roxann Mayros</b> CEO of the National Council of Private Agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCPABVI)	1/1/2003 to 6/30/2009	Public

*continued on page 6*



# 2008 NAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*continued from page 5*

<b>Steven Obremski</b> Regional Development Officer Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc.	1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010	Consumer
--	------------------------	----------

**NAC Past-President**

<b>Richard P. Oestreich, Ph.D.</b> Consultant in the Field, Ohio	1/1/2001 to 12/31/2007	Public
---	------------------------	--------

**NAC Secretary**

<b>Lee W. Robinson, EdD</b> Superintendent, School for the Blind, Retired, Utah	1/1/2008 to 12/31/2010	Consumer
--	------------------------	----------

<b>Ms. M. J. Schmitt, 1st VP/ACB</b> Systems Analyst, Sears, Roebuck & Co., Retired, New York	Representing ACB	ad-hoc
--	------------------	--------

**NAC Vice-President**

<b>J. Graham Strong, O.D.</b> Professor, School of Optometry Director, Centre for Sight Enhancement University of Waterloo	7/01/06 to 6/30/2009	Member
---	----------------------	--------

<b>Carmen G. Suminski,</b> Superintendent North Dakota School for the Blind	Representing COSB	ad-hoc
---	-------------------	--------

**NAC President**

<b>R. Tracy Williams, O.D.</b> Executive Director Deicke Center for Visual Rehabilitation	1/1/2003 to 6/30/2009	Member
---	-----------------------	--------



## NAC REVIEWER TRAINING

A special 'thank you' to Dr. James Bemis, Dr. Marje Kaiser and Dr. Lee Robinson for completing the on-site reviewer training manual. The manual is written in a user-friendly manner complete with a power point presentation.

Applicants and inquiries for becoming on-site peer reviewers are most welcome. The reviewers are the backbone of the accreditation process and promote continuous improvements while providing opportunities for cross-pollination of expertise.

*continued on page 7*



# NAC REVIEWER TRAINING

*continued from page 6*

Reviewers benefit from nationwide exposure to the people and the operating systems of the agencies or schools they are reviewing with the NAC Standards. Typically, reviewers are assigned to and focus on areas of service or business within their particular professional experience and expertise. Many professionals in our field say that serving as an OSPR reviewer gives them far more benefits than the effort of preparation, travel, reviewing and report writing consumes.

Reviewers serve as volunteers with travel and lodging expenses reimbursed. **Help us make a difference! All interested professionals in our field are encouraged to apply.**

## THE NEW NAC WITH EMPHASES ON:

- Consumer involvement
- Broad national representation on the Board of Directors
- Continuous standards upgrading
- Due diligence in every accreditation decision
- Training reviewers and matching expertise with agency/school circumstances
- Linkages to related organizations like the National Eye Institute, the Blinded Veterans Association, Council of Schools for the Blind and others
- Streamlined follow-up requirements to maintain accreditation
- Minimized costs of our products

One of the most invigorating feed-back messages we are hearing from member agency executives is that “the NAC process is phenomenal!” The Self Assessment coupled with the peer-review provides an organization a structured path towards improvements and refinements. Thank-you for your feedback.

## OUR MISSION...

- ¥ To develop standards which promote effective, sound, and publicly accountable programs of service, which help visually disabled children and adults achieve their full potential
- ¥ To ensure, through the accreditation process, that the standards are being met by programs of service which seek accreditation
- ¥ To give public recognition to those agencies and schools, which operate in compliance with the national standards for accreditation

The Fiscal Year 2007 NAC Audit Report  
was compiled by  
George Csatory CPA, Inc.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Tel.: (440) 409-0340  
steve@nacassb.org  
jterezhahmy@nacassb.org  
www.nacassb.org

National Accreditation Council (NAC)  
For Agencies Serving People with Blindness and Visual Impairment  
21475 Lorain Road, Suite 300  
Fairview Park, Ohio 44126



NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
CLEVELAND, OH  
PERMIT NO. 935