



**Pennsylvania - Delaware Chapter**  
**Association for the Education and Rehabilitation**  
**of the Blind and Visually Impaired**  
[www.penn-delaer.org](http://www.penn-delaer.org)

## **Penn-Del AER Conference**

### **Buzz #1: Session Savvy!**

#### **2019 Penn-Del AER Conference Buzz!**

The Penn-Del AER Conference Planning Committee has been working hard to once again provide a **conference experience to remember!**

In July of 2018, committee members sat down to study evaluation forms collected at the 2018 conference and discuss suggestions for the 2019 event. That meeting served to kick-start plans and arrangements — and a huge amount of behind-the-scenes activity has been happening throughout the year to build the 2019 conference.

There are literally hundreds of details these volunteers manage each year to ensure that conference attendees can get the maximum professional and personal benefits from the conference! Currently, conference committee members are **buzzing** around, making final arrangements with our presenters and exhibitors, designing materials, organizing rooms and audio-visual equipment, managing registration, selecting refreshments for meals and networking events, and much more!

#### **Get the Buzz**

During the next few weeks, watch your inbox for additional “Penn-Del AER Conference Buzz” updates like this one. We want to share the excitement and provide information to help you get the most from your conference experience!

In this Conference Buzz, we’ll share a bit about the 2019 presentations, then tell you about sessions for which presenters have asked attendees to do a bit of planning and preparation to allow you to participate more fully.

In future Buzz updates, we will provide details about specific types of social and networking opportunities available during the conference, offer information and suggestions to help you navigate the conference schedule most successfully, and much more.

The Pennsylvania-Delaware Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) supports professionals who provide education & rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments.

## Haven't Registered Yet? No Problem!

[Click here](#) to download the registration form. Save the form to your computer, then open it using Adobe Reader or Acrobat (do not complete the form using Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, or another web browser). Enter your information, save the document, and submit it as directed in the form.

## Get Session Savvy

This year, our conference theme is “Charting Our Course: Together Toward Tomorrow.” Our lineup of presentations certainly illustrates how we can make a difference by helping those we serve navigate today’s incredible array of products and services.

The conference is divided into eleven “sessions.” There are three general sessions during which everyone gathers to hear the keynote, midnote, and footnote addresses. Another session is set aside to allow you time to visit both our innovative and informative poster presentations and the many booths in the Exhibitor Hall. During the remaining seven sessions, attendees can choose to attend one of five or six sessions happening “concurrently” throughout the hotel. This allows you to customize your conference experience to meet your personal and professional needs.

Conference attendees can select from 40 concurrent sessions and visit nine poster presentations. We’ve also lined up outstanding speakers for this year’s three general sessions who will inspire all of us to take a closer look at how we can work together to build a better tomorrow.

Whether you serve children or adults, whether you are interested in learning new skills, want to know more about recent study results, or would like to participate in more “experiential” learning activities... this year’s conference has lots for you!

For a look at the entire list of sessions available at this year’s conference, download the [2019 Penn-Del AER Conference At-a-Glance](#)

To help you make the most of this year’s conference, we have prepared a set of inside tips and details about unique opportunities being offered by some of this year’s presenters. Attendees are asked to do a bit of preparation or to bring items to these sessions.

## Can You Picture This?

Do you have a friend or client who is visually impaired with no artistic outlet? Are you visually impaired and wondering if you can paint pictures? At 8:15 Friday morning (Session IX), Maureen Army will lead an exploration of adaptive techniques for painting with a visual impairment. This session will begin with a hands-on experience in which participants will use vision simulators and blindfolds to explore painting with limited or no vision. Participants can try adaptive techniques as well as improvisation.

This experiential double session — Painting with Visual Twists — is limited to 25 “artists,” but observers are welcome. Come join the discussion as paintings are created and revealed!

If you plan to attend this session and paint, please wear your favorite artist's smock or old clothes. Non-toxic acrylic paint will be provided for use, but this paint is permanent and cannot be removed from clothing.

## Want to Show Your Stuff?

Have you ever noticed that the field of visual impairment is full of talented, creative people? Are you one of those folks who finds innovative ways to teach concepts or make a challenging task easier even if you need to create something new or adapt existing tools?

At 9:45 Friday morning (Session X), Maria Lepore-Stevens will lead a roundtable-style presentation where we will investigate how professionals in the field of visual impairment are adapting equipment and materials given limited resources and funds. This session — Show Your Stuff: Creative Equipment in Vision Professions — is your opportunity to share your creations and learn from others.

Participants are invited to bring their own innovative adaptations — or pictures with a good verbal description — to share. Whether it is an adapted mobility device for a very young child with limited mobility, a new type of auditory ball, novel tactile maps, or new equipment produced in tandem with OTs and PTs to better assist students and clients, this is a session to share ideas. Participants will also leave with one new piece of auditory equipment they will make during the session.

## Adapting High School STEM Materials for a Braille User?

This presentation is designed for teachers of the visually impaired who support a braille user in higher-level math and science classes such as algebra, geometry, or chemistry. At 2:15 Thursday afternoon (Session VII, Maria Baldwin and Michele Resch will first review the responsibilities of the general education teacher as a partner in creating access to the curriculum and strategies for setting up the general education classroom for independence. Through hands-on activities, participants will then learn or review the basics of creating computer-based tactile materials using free software. Several established methods such as the Draftsman, Perkins braillewriter, and APH Federal Quota materials will also be demonstrated.

If you plan to attend this session — Supporting Braille Users in High School Math and Science: Tips, Tricks, and Hacks — the presenters suggest that you bring a Perkins braillewriter if possible. For hands-on experience creating computer-based tactile graphics, you should also bring a Windows-based PC with QuickTac 4.0 downloaded and installed. QuickTac can be found on the Duxbury System's website at

<https://www.duxburysystems.com/product2.asp?product=QuickTac&level=free&action=up>.

## Abacus Anxiety?

Are you finding it difficult to use or teach the Cranmer abacus for computations beyond basic addition and subtraction? Want to learn a simplified method? When Thomas Forrest, Jr., a long-time abacus teacher and advocate, learned that his daughter and other TVIs were encountering this challenge he set out to find a solution. He researched abacus methods used by other cultures throughout the centuries and came up with an option for the Cranmer abacus. In his session at 4:15 Wednesday afternoon (Session III), he will introduce his new

method for teaching and performing more complex computations. This abacus method uses simplified strategies to perform multiplication and division of whole numbers and decimals, calculations using fractions, and square root calculations.

If you plan to attend this session — Simplified Calculating Strategies for the Cranmer Abacus Using the Double-A Method — please bring two “abaci” for hands-on practice. You might also wish to download an app to your tablet or smartphone to simulate abacus use. For example, the “Abacus 2.0” app for iOS devices by Kenji Yamamoto was developed specifically for visual learners.

## Planning Sensitivity Training?

At 8:15 Thursday morning (Session IV), Heather Dougherty and Maria Lepore-Stevens will provide an interactive presentation whose goal is to investigate strategies for developing differentiated sensitivity trainings for a variety of audiences. During this session — We Taught the Law and the Blind Community Won — the presenters will first share their experiences providing sensitivity training to local law enforcement officers regarding the needs of the blind community. They will then lead a facilitated discussion regarding the unique ways in which session attendees have provided this type of training to students, professionals, and/or members of the community.

If you are interested in designing this type of presentation yourself, come share your ideas and concerns! Time permitting, small group discussions regarding sensitivity training needs for specific groups will be organized based on attendee interests.

**Watch for the next Conference Buzz** — and remember, it’s not too late to register for the [2019 Penn-DeI AER Conference](#). [Click here](#) to download the Registration Form!

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