



*Established 1858*

## *Institutional Advancement*

Lynne Hanner  
Director, Institutional Advancement  
Executive Director, AIDB Foundation  
256.761.3206  
[hanner.lynne@aidb.state.al.us](mailto:hanner.lynne@aidb.state.al.us)

## NEWS RELEASE FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jessica L. Edmiston  
256.761.3470  
[edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us](mailto:edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us)  
[www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org)

### **AIDB chosen as Mercedes-Benz Community Stars semi-finalist, competing for \$25,000**

With five Talladega-based campuses and eight statewide regional centers, telling the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) story in 60-seconds might seem impossible.

Yet, AIDB finds itself competing on a national scale in the *Community Stars: Mercedes-Benz Dealers Give Back* program, a celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the automobile. Challenging charities and non-profits nationwide to submit a 60-second video in one of five categories—Environment & Sustainability, Health & Service, Youth Empowerment, Arts & Music or Education—AIDB was chosen as a semi-finalist in Education for *AIDB: A Daring Adventure!*

“We are so excited to be chosen as a semi-finalist in highlighting AIDB’s Tuscaloosa Regional Center services,” states AIDB Foundation Board Member John Duckworth, a Tuscaloosa resident who alerted AIDB to the contest. “Our video depicts the young children who are deaf and blind that we serve through the AIDB Regional Center and answers the question, ‘What can I be when I grow up? Absolutely anything!!’ Featuring successful deaf and blind role models including lawyers, educators and a current University of Alabama student, *AIDB: A Daring Adventure!* is a triumph of ability over disability. I couldn’t be more proud.”

Winners will be chosen by the number of votes received by the general public. Individuals can vote once a day, every day until October 21 at 5 p.m., PST, with the grand-prize winners – one in each category – to receive \$25,000. Announcements will be made October 24. To view AIDB’s video and to vote, visit <http://on.fb.me/qRkvWN>.

If chosen as a \$25,000 award finalist, AIDB will use the funds to enhance summer work/educational experience programs and/or assistive technology training for students

who are deaf and blind served by the AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center in Alabama's Black Belt.

"AIDB serves more than 20,000 individuals who are deaf, blind and multidisabled and their families statewide, with close to 1,100 through the AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center," explains AIDB President Dr. Terry Graham. "The AIDB story is distinct, with organizations like Mercedes-Benz playing an important role in our success. *The Community Stars: Mercedes-Benz Dealers Give Back* program will promote AIDB's story nationally, addressing baby-boomers' concerns as their sight or hearing diminishes; providing instructional ideas for teachers and students in their local schools; or answering the question, 'What can deaf and blind children and adults do with their lives?' Of course, our answer is and has always been, 'With your support, absolutely anything!'"

#### **Sidebar: Help AIDB Win \$25,000!**

- Vote once a day, every day, at <http://on.fb.me/qRkvWN>;
- Forward this news release to individuals in your professional and personal email accounts (and ask them to forward the message on!);
- Post this news release to your Facebook and Twitter accounts; and
- Add the following tag to all email messages:

Vote for AIDB to win \$25,000 in the Mercedes-Benz Community Stars Contest:

<http://on.fb.me/qRkvWN>

- Contact 256.761.3470 or [edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us](mailto:edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us) with questions.

#### **AIDB ([www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org))**

More than 150 years strong, AIDB's mission is to provide comprehensive education and service programs of superior quality for children and adults who are deaf, blind and multidisabled and their families. This commitment to excellence is facilitated through three residential schools, serving children, ages three to 21 from across Alabama (Alabama School for the Blind, Alabama School for the Deaf and Helen Keller School of Alabama); an education/rehabilitation program for adults, 16 and older (E.H. Gentry Facility); and an industrial, manufacturing complex (Alabama Industries for the Blind). In Fiscal Year 2009-10, AIDB served more than 20,000 individuals through its Talladega units and statewide network of Regional Centers located in Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, **Tuscaloosa** and Tuscumbia.

#### **The AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center**

The AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center serves close to 1,100 children and adults who are deaf, blind or multidisabled –and their families – in Bibb, Choctow, Fayette, Greene, Lamar, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa and Hale Counties. Tailored to meet individual community needs, the AIDB Tuscaloosa Regional Center provides early intervention services to children, birth to three; Kinderprep classes for toddlers; and individualized services to school-age students not served by AIDB's residential

programs. For adults, instruction in assistive technology, orientation and mobility, Braille, and American Sign Language are provided at-large with partnerships developed with municipalities, state agencies and regional businesses which include job coaching, interpreting, Braille/large print reproduction and various workshops.