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## **NEWS RELEASE FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**June 10, 2011**

### **AIDB's Birmingham Regional Center Sets Sights on Summer Camp**

With a \$10,000 EyeSight Foundation of Alabama (ESFA) award and through collaboration with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Optometry and School of Education, Special Education, the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) Birmingham Regional Center will conduct a summer camp for students, ages six to 13, who are blind/low vision.

Sponsored in part by the AIDB Foundation, the Summer Chill Out will host 20 students who are visually impaired/blind from Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Walker Counties on select dates in June and July. UAB Special Education students, in conjunction with the UAB School of Optometry, will aid in supervising the camp and implementing tactile student activities as a component of their graduate studies.

"It is crucial that graduate students participate in academic and leisure activities with students with special needs during their professional studies," states Mary Jean Sanspree, Ph.D. Research Professor and Associate Scientist, UAB School of Optometry. "The collaboration between UAB Program for the Visually Impaired and AIDB "Chill Out" camp is the perfect venue for the campers to have summer fun and the graduate students to learn from the campers. EyeSight Foundation of Alabama funding is allowing future teachers to have a quality professional development setting and children with vision loss several days packed with independent living skills embedded in the camp format."

The expansion of outreach services for blind and visually impaired students served in Alabama public schools is a major priority in AIDB's strategic plan, explains Lynne Hanner, AIDB Foundation executive director and AIDB Office of Institutional Advancement director, who expressed her appreciation to the internal and external agencies involved.

"We are pleased that AIDB, UAB and the Eyesight Foundation are coming together to help parents of children with visual impairments find a fun and rewarding answer to the inevitable question of summer vacation time. The Summer Chill Out is a tremendous opportunity for agency collaboration and will introduce blind and visually impaired children to accessible recreation and daily living activities in the Birmingham area they might otherwise miss. It is a summer investment that will pay dividends all year long."

Planned on-site activities include hands-on assistive technology and musical presentations by AIDB's E.H. Gentry Facility and Alabama Symphony Orchestra Education Director Meaghan Heinrich, respectively. Scheduled fieldtrips include the Alabama School of Fine Arts, Lakeshore Foundation, Birmingham Zoo, McWane Center, Birmingham Farmers' Market and East Lake Park and AIDB's Mariana Greene Henry Special Equestrian and Alabama School for the Blind programs. The Summer Chill Out Camp will culminate with a carnival and awards day held at the AIDB Birmingham Regional Center.

"ESFA is delighted to support AIDB's Birmingham Regional Center summer camp initiative," explains Torrey DeKeyser, ESFA executive director. "The learning opportunities and enrichment experiences it will provide for blind and low vision students will enrich their lives immeasurably. An especially appealing aspect of the program is the collaboration with UAB's Vision Education Program—also supported through ESFA grants—an excellent partnership that brings together two very outstanding programs for the benefit of the children served."

As one parent stated when registering, "We've been waiting for this a long time."

Registration ends June 20 or when the 20 available slots are filled. For specific camp dates and times or to learn more, visit [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org) or contact Jessica Edmiston at (256) 761.3470 or [edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us](mailto:edmiston.jessica@aidb.state.al.us).

### **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

AIDB's mission, now more than 150-years strong, 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 carried out through three residential schools, serving children, ages three to 21 from across the state (Alabama School for the Deaf, Alabama School for the Blind and Helen Keller School of Alabama) in addition to an education and rehabilitation program for adults, ages 16 and older (E.H. Gentry Facility) and an industrial, manufacturing complex (Alabama Industries for the Blind). AIDB serves more than 20,000 individuals annually through its five Talladega campuses and a statewide network of

Regional Centers (Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Tuscumbia). To tour or for more information, call AIDB at (256) 761.3207 or visit [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org).

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### **The AIDB Birmingham Regional Center**

The Birmingham Regional Center encompasses Blount, Chilton, Walker, Jefferson and Shelby Counties. With programs and supports tailored to specific community needs, most services are free to residents of Alabama who have a 25% diagnosed vision or hearing loss and for children with a diagnosed developmental delay. Offering an array of children, adult, senior and community services related to deafness and blindness, detailed information can be found at [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org) or by contacting Larscene Turk at [turk.larscene@aidb.state.al.us](mailto:turk.larscene@aidb.state.al.us) or (205) 328.3989.

### **The EyeSight Foundation**

The EyeSight Foundation of Alabama (ESFA) is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to serve as a catalyst to improve eyesight through education, research and access to care. Awarding grants in various categories related to public education and training; routine and preventative eye care; low vision and rehabilitation and research, additional information on grant awards and funding categories can be found at [www.eyesightfoundation.org](http://www.eyesightfoundation.org).

### **UAB School of Optometry**

Since 1972, AIDB has partnered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Optometry to conduct clinics through AIDB's Low Vision Center. Specific to this proposal, AIDB will work closely with the UAB Vision Graduate Program to provide valuable education and training programs for students and interns in a summer community education program. For additional information, contact Carol Allison at [callison@uab.edu](mailto:callison@uab.edu) or (205) 975.5481.

The UAB School of Optometry aspires to make significant contributions to eye and vision care knowledge, vision science, and to provide meaningful service to humanity. For additional information, contact Mary Jean Sanspree, Ph.D., at [sanspree@uab.edu](mailto:sanspree@uab.edu) or (205) 934.6723.

### **UAB Special Education Department**

Under the UAB School of Education, the Special Education Department encompasses the areas of Collaborative Teaching, Early Childhood Special Education and Visual Impairments. Within the AIDB-Birmingham Regional Center Summer Chill Out, UAB Special Education graduate students will assist with camp activities. For additional information, contact Diane Pevsner, Ph.D., at [dpevsner@uab.edu](mailto:dpevsner@uab.edu) or (205) 975.5351.

**Media Note:** The Camp schedule is attached; students attending will have signed publicity releases. Please contact Ms. Edmiston to schedule a feature on a child from a specific county and/or to coordinate interviews at any of the locations previously cited.

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**AIDB Birmingham Regional Center  
2011 Summer Camp Chill Out  
Camp Schedule**

**June 21, 2011**

**Theme: Get Cookin'**

**9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.**

**Cookin' Kids: Assistive Technology Orientation**

**10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

**Cookin' Kids: AT Snack (Dirt Cups)**

**10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Cookin Kids: Kids Cookbook  
(UAB Activity, adding dirt cup recipe)  
Note: Will be converted to Braille/LP**

**11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Lunch & Play at Homewood Park**

**June 23, 2011**

**Theme: Get Creative**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Alabama School of Fine Arts  
Visual Arts  
Dance  
Creative Writing  
Theatre Arts  
Music**

**June 28, 2011**

**Theme: Get Movin'**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**The Lakeshore Foundation  
Swimming  
Rock Climbing  
Indoor Track w/Adaptive Equip.  
Goal Ball**

**June 30, 2011**

**Theme: Get Wild**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**The Birmingham Zoo  
Carousel & Train Rides  
Petting Zoo  
Panning for Jewels**

**Rain Plan: Bowling, Brunswick Riverview Lanes, Hwy 280, Birmingham  
2908 River View Rd  
Birmingham, AL 35242  
(205) 991.3900**

**July 12, 2011**

**Theme: Get Imaginative**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**The McWane Center  
Imax (Descriptive Video)  
Critters (Petting)**

**July 14, 2011**

**Theme: Get Fresh**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Farmers' Market & Fishing (East Lake)**

**Rain Plan: Descriptive Movie @ The Regal 16, Trussville, Alabama  
5895 Trussville Crossings Pky  
Birmingham, AL 35235  
(205) 661.9994**

**July 19, 2011**

**Theme: Get Musical**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Alabama Symphony Orchestra @ BRC  
Pizza Lunch**

**July 21, 2011**

**Theme: Get Your Sense On**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**AIDB Equestrian Center (MGHSE)  
Horseback Riding  
Tractor Ride w/ Popsicles  
Barn Activity  
Leather Craft  
Lunch at Alabama School for the Blind (ASB)  
ASB Fragrance Garden**

**July 23, 2011**

**Theme: Get Chill**

**10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

**Chill Out Carnival  
Moon Jumps  
Cotton Candy/Popcorn  
Hotdogs, etc.**

**12 p.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Lunch and Awards**