

# Sights & Sounds

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Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind was established in 1858. Today AIDB provides education, rehabilitation and employment opportunities to children and adults who are deaf, blind or multidisabled through the Alabama School for the Deaf, Alabama School for the Blind, Helen Keller School of Alabama, Gentry Technical Facility, Alabama Industries for the Blind and the Office of Health and Clinical Services. Regional Centers are located in Auburn, Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Tuscumbia. AIDB is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

#### Sights & Sounds



#### On The Cover

Casey Hamilton's love for animals turned into work experience with Talladega veterinarian Dr. Sally Smith. Now Casey plans to pursue a career as a veterinary assistant thanks to a new Alabama School for the Deaf Health Sciences Program. (Mike Clemmer Photo)

# Up Close and Personal

from the president's desk



Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind is known to be the most comprehensive education and service program of its kind in the country. Many different phrases are used to describe this distinction like - cradle to grave, birth through aging, etc. Terms like "diverse collection of programs" or "continuum of services" also illustrate that AIDB can literally support every age of a person's life.

Let's take a quick look. Within hours of a child's birth, AIDB works with families of infants and toddlers diagnosed with hearing and vision loss in their homes and local communities all across this state. We call that early intervention and serve children birth to five years of age through our Regional Centers.

School-age children, ages three to 21 from across Alabama, are enrolled in three campus programs in Talladega where they excel at academics, athletics, career exploration, independent living and leadership programs. Approximately 70 percent of these students are residential. AIDB also serves more than 1,000 children with vision loss in public schools through our Instructional Resource Center for the Blind.

At our Gentry campus, adults ages 16 and over find personal adjustment services, career exploration and training, college prep and all the remedial and independent living programs they need to become productive citizens. The Gentry program intertwines well with our Regional Centers, again to serve deaf and blind adults in their homes and communities across Alabama.

Employment is one of the ultimate goals for most of our students and clients in businesses and companies statewide or at the Alabama Industries for the Blind (AIB). A diverse manufacturing and service employer in its own right, AIB is the state's largest employer of blind individuals. Rounding out AIDB's "continuum of services" are our rapidly expanding programs for senior citizens with age related hearing and vision loss.

Last year, we served 12,419 individuals who are deaf and blind and their families. So what does being the "most comprehensive education and service program in the country" mean to each of them?

To each of these 12,419 individuals - it's not business, it's personal. It's the opportunity to develop independence, self-worth and self-esteem. It's feeling good about working for your own living. It's the pride on a parent's face when their child is awarded an academic scholarship, wins a state track championship or sings for large crowds of people. For the parent of a newborn faced with a sensory challenge, it is hope for the future. And for seniors coping with the aging process, it is a discovery that quality of life is not gone.

Diverse? Yes. AIDB is proud to be the most comprehensive program of our kind. And we take our jobs seriously. After all, it's not just business, it's personal.





# A Blueprint for the Future

**Alfa-Daniel Hall is an icon of confidence for residents and a benchmark for new dorm facilities at AIDB**

**By Jessica L. Edmiston**

Olivia Leader sits at her new richly-stained wooden desk, seemingly oblivious to the entourage in her room, taking pictures, examining every nook and corner.

Other 10-year-olds might be anxious to have roughly 300 strangers examining their bedrooms in a span of an hour. Instead, Olivia responds to questions, says 'cheese' when prompted, and sits, happily with her puzzle.

Olivia, her grandparents, and several hundred guests have just completed the dedication of Alfa-Daniel Hall, a new single-level, 8,657 square-foot residential facility at AIDB's Helen Keller School of Alabama (HKS) which serves children ages three to 21 with sensory and multiple disabilities. The new residence hall is the result of a \$250,000 lead gift from The Daniel Foundation of Alabama, matched by Alfa Insurance and Alabama Farmers Federation Board of Directors and numerous other donors.

The new building replaced deteriorating Rogers Hall, a

two-story facility, with no elevator, no sprinkler system and an antiquated fire escape explains HKS Principal Erminel Love-Trescott. "Alfa-Daniel Hall is attractive, yet functional. It's a safer, more practical alternative than putting the same funds into renovating an old building since once finished, you still have an old building."

"After reviewing architect renovation estimates, the AIDB Foundation Board of Directors and the AIDB Board of Trustees felt that a more prudent use of funds would be to replace the current two-story facility with a new one-story building to house students," explains AIDB President Terry Graham.

*Alfa-Daniel Hall was designed by Barganier, Davis, Sims Architects of Montgomery and constructed by Tom Jones Construction, Oxford.*

*It's moving in day for Tiffany Boucher, Teague McDonald and Diamonds Mitchell!*





Decorated by HKS Residential Director John Connell, the inside is awash with warm rusts, terracottas, grays and greens—combinations that give the open kitchen and living area a cozy feel. Tile and wood are utilized throughout in a manner to keep the area crisp and modern for many years to come.

"Olivia does not communicate using adjectives," explains Jerry Leader, project donor and caregiver, along with wife Shirley, to Olivia. "But, we speak with her about the new residence hall and ask if she likes her new room. Smiling, she says, 'yes,' drawing out the one-syllable word."

Rooms are outfitted so students can add personal touches to armoires, desks and bookshelves. In addition, bathrooms feature automated lifts that lower students in whirlpool tubs, a safer alternative for both student and dorm parent. Showers are wide enough for wheelchairs and all restrooms are equipped with sensor toilets and vanities. Likewise, automatic entrances, wide

doorways and large bathrooms enable wheelchair bound and students with mobility issues, easy access to all parts of the building. The facility also has a state-of-the-art emergency and security system.

"Alfa-Daniel Hall could be the blue-

print for future construction projects," explains Graham. "Not only does the facility possess uniquely-designed features for students with multiple disabilities, but it is an amazing, beautiful facility - one that would not be possible without the support of The Daniel Foundation, Alfa Insurance and Alabama Farmers Federation, and other significant donors across the state. This is home for our students, and we want the best possible atmosphere for them to grow and to learn."

"The residence hall's new features certainly enhance my granddaughter's ability to learn in the classroom and in the dormitory," says Leader. "The dormitory training Olivia receives is a large part of her experience at the school. Dorm life has shown Olivia how to get along with others and how to take care of herself. Most importantly, it has taught her independence. This new facility is something that these young children will enjoy while feeling safe and secure."

"Olivia has taken giant steps at HKS. I cannot describe how good we feel about the little things she now does herself that most people take for granted," says Leader of Olivia who came to HKS when she was five-years-old. "If not for the education, training, love and affection she gets at HKS, Olivia would not be able to do normal things that normal people do every day."

"Further, the state of Alabama, the Legislature and the Governor should be highly commended for their continued support of AIDB. I know that others come from other states so their children can attend HKS, and I can understand why. It is a great thing as illustrated by private support for Alfa-Daniel Hall. I am just very appreciative of state and private support and that a place like HKS exists." 🏠

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Daniel Foundation Executive Director Maria Kennedy helps celebrate the new dorm.



*Olivia Leader and fellow Alfa-Daniel Hall residents planted a tree as their gift to future generations of HKS students.*



*Terry Graham thanks Alfa President and CEO Jerry Newby.*

"The Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Insurance are proud to support AIDB in its work to help young men and women develop their God-given abilities and reach their full potential," said Alfa President Jerry Newby. "Without AIDB, many blind and deaf individuals, particularly those in rural areas, would not have access to specialized educational programs, facilities and materials. This fine, new facility greatly enhances AIDB's ability to fulfill its mission."





# Academics with a Personal Touch

By Rose Myers

Mike Clemmer

Alabama School for the Blind will mark its 150th anniversary next year - and the school's students and alumni can celebrate a rich history built on a strong foundation of academic excellence. An extremely high percentage of ASB graduates pursue postsecondary degrees at the state's leading universities, grounded by their persistence and solid academic training. And while many Alabama high school students struggle with the High School Graduation Exam, one class of students hit their mark on their first attempt as 10th-graders. How do they do it?





Mike Clemmer

The entire campus swells with pride over the amazing success of the Alabama School for the Blind's (ASB) junior class. The five students made a name for themselves last year when they became the first ASB 10th grade class to pass the entire High School Graduation Exam on the first try. That feat defied the odds and set a record for the school. How did they do it? Ask students their secret, but don't expect a straight answer.

"It was easy," quips ASB junior David Chappell. "We were prepared."

"The multiple choice made it easy," adds Dustin Jones.

Their teachers, however, say the students didn't ace the exam because it was simple. Many high-schoolers across Alabama fail the graduation exam or at least parts of it and must repeatedly try to pass it to get a diploma. The ASB students spent only a few weeks preparing for the exam. What was their motivation?

"Mrs. (Martha) Waites hung a steak dinner over our heads," says John Carroll. Waites, Director of ASB Academics, took the class to Logan's to celebrate after they got the good news last year.

"Our math teacher said she would hurt us," jokes K. J. Maddox.

All joking aside, English teacher Brenda Uptain explains the class passed the test on the first try because they were determined to do it.

Government teacher Susan Carlisle has been teaching this group since they were in the seventh grade and states the hard-working students deserve all the credit. "The whole class is very disciplined," she says. "No matter what the assignment, they always turn in their work. All five are very reliable and dependable." Because of their hard work and accomplishments the group is referred to as the "Fantastic Five."

Joyce Reaves, former music teacher for the group, recalls K.J. as being especially musically talented. He sings in his church's choir, plays drums and piano. He even starred in a preschool program that she still shows on video to other students.

Uptain praises Leah Sutton, the only girl in the class. Shy and soft-spoken, Leah wrote a play for a contest that required a story dealing with a disability. Her drama involved two young women, one with a physical disability and one with a visual disability. The two were mistreated by another woman who developed a disability herself and ultimately became friends with the young women. Uptain notes that Leah works extra

hard to maintain her spot as a high-achiever.

"I keep them busy," Uptain says. "They have gone farther in the American Literature book than any class I've ever had. They're a bright bunch of kids."

Leah, John, David, Dustin and K.J. – all legally blind – have been together for years. Three of them– John, David and Leah – are residential students and fuss like any teenagers. Like all adolescents, they insult each other, hurl jokes like paperwads and mumble too low for adults to hear. They're also very competitive. Each scored in the 20s on the ACT.

But like all of their fellow ASB classmates, the "Fantastic Five" paved their way to academic excellence when they arrived on campus, securing individualized instruction and specialized resources upon enrollment. Here, students get the personal touch.

"One reason parents choose to send their kids here is because of the small classroom size," says Carlisle. "They get the individual attention they need. That's why we exist."

Carlisle shows a tactile sculpture of King Tut to illustrate her point that ASB provides whatever its students need to learn. She also has tactile maps and Braille is in ready use for students who require it. Talking computers allow classes to use the Internet. Tests are printed in extra-large font size or Braille to suit the needs of each student's degree of vision.

"We do hands-on everything," she explains. "Public schools can't do that because they just don't have the resources. They can't do it for just one child. What we do is a specialty."

Uptain, who has taught in public schools and at her ASB alma mater, says students with disabilities are often forgotten and embarrassed in public schools. They can feel isolated and uncomfortable. "That all changes when they come here," she explains. "What kids need is to grow up as normal as possible. Here, their visual impairment is not always sticking out."

ASB Principal Carl Ponder says staff remove the issue of vision as a factor in educating a child, no matter what that requires. "The result is that high achievers will be even higher achievers. These students will hit the ground running when they get to higher education."

Ponder notes he was not surprised when the 10th grade class passed the graduation exam on the first try. Next to the accolades, the main benefit is that no time will be spent on remediation; these students are covering their required coursework. And he quickly reminds them that they still have much study ahead before receiving their academic diplomas!

Ponder explains that ASB's edge doesn't stop when the school day ends. In fact, ASB students have a ninth period that runs from 3 to 4 p.m. every day, a time set aside for physical education for older students, band and chorus practice. French is offered after supper for students who need a foreign language for their diploma. The school then runs a late bus for Talladega-area students and offers temporary lodging to day students who don't live nearby.

The average class size of 8 to 10 students – ASB has 115 students total – allows the flexibility to offer exactly what each student needs, concludes Ponder. "This is the personal touch." 🏠



**Dustin**

"He has the highest average and he talks the most. He probably will make the most money and would be a good lawyer. He doesn't have to study and picks things up easily." Dustin plans to go to medical school.



**K.J.**

"He's the funny one. He's self-disciplined and keeps his cool. He has a very good outgoing personality." K.J. plans a career in business management.



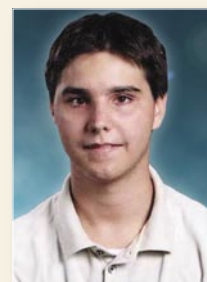
**Leah**

"Leah keeps the peace among the boys. She's very creative, is the hardest worker and sets very high standards for herself. And she puts in the extra time when it's needed." Leah plans to become a playwright.



**David**

"He's very organized, has great note-taking and mobility skills. He will do great in college. He has learned what he needed here." David plans to become a Braille instructor.



**John**

"He's the quiet one, very polite. He likes to help people. He takes horrible notes but makes exceptional grades. He has a great memory and will do well in college." John plans to study computer science.



# A HEALTHY CHOICE:

## Medical Field Offers New Career Options for Deaf Graduates

**An innovative Alabama School for the Deaf Health Sciences Program opens a new world of career opportunities and training that previously was just out of reach for many deaf students**

By Rose Myers

Casey Hamilton can communicate with animals. You might even call her AIDB's own version of the "Dog Whisperer." But she doesn't do it with her voice. The 19-year-old Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) student uses her intuitive senses to figure out what a sick or injured cat or dog needs.

"I like animals," signs the petite senior from Birmingham. "I like helping them when they're sick."

That gift is Casey's future. She discovered - with help from ASD's new Health Sciences and Occupations Program - that she can carve out a career in veterinary medicine that combines her passion and skills into a paycheck. Casey already has worked in a vet's office and plans to train as a veterinary assistant.

"She's Casey Doolittle," teases Paul Millard, ASD's vocational director. "Animals trust her. I've seen it."

The goal of the newest program under AIDB's umbrella is to turn the booming health sciences field into job opportunities for deaf graduates. Students

will be introduced  
to the various  
medical fields  
as ninth-

graders, then will focus on their particular interests. Class training will lead to on-the-job training and ultimately into a career.

"They don't have to settle for working at fast food restaurants," says Susan Lambert, Health Sciences Program instructor. "We can provide job options for them to check out."

ASD is blazing a trail with its Health Sciences and Occupations Program, which likely will be scrutinized and copied elsewhere. No such program exists anywhere in the country. Research is being done on a similar idea at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and at the Rochester School for the Deaf in New York, but ASD is the only campus to have classes underway.

"There is no program like this anywhere we've found," Millard says. "We're on the cutting edge, and I believe we will become a model for others to emulate."

The seed for the model program was planted a decade ago when the Vocational Tech Department set up an advisory council to look into student employment possibilities. That group found that graduates were having difficulty finding desirable positions, particularly true for females. That finding, plus the demand for trained workers in the mushrooming medical profession, sprouted an idea for a new field of study.

Much discussion followed, as well as a search for funding. Finally, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services found federal money to pay one staffer for the first year. That kicked off a difficult search for a deaf educator who could develop a health sciences curriculum. The search ended with Lambert, who has a bachelor's and master's in deaf education and taught in Alaska for 10 years. Millard said they couldn't have found better.

Lambert, who is hard-of-hearing and signs while she speaks, praises the vision that brought her to the program. She predicts the opportunities offered by the program will improve the lives of countless students.

Lambert started last year with nothing but a



*Casey Hamilton's love for animals and work experience with Talladega veterinarian, Dr. Sally Smith, has inspired her to pursue a career as a veterinary assistant.*



sample textbook and a handful of eager students. She took them to medical offices and nursing homes, conducted campus blood drives and invited Emergency Medical Technicians and physician's assistants to speak to her class. Basically, she used anything to introduce students to the medical field and to encourage them to consider pursuing it.

And it worked. One year later, three students are following their dreams. One is working at a nursing home, one is studying massage therapy and a third is training as a dental hygienist. Five students have jobs lined up for this summer, with 24 enrolled in classes.

"Some students think, 'I can't do that because I can't hear,'" says Lambert. "It's not true. They can do it."

Margie Hutto already knows what she wants to do. The 19-year-old from Andalusia plans to be a dental lab tech, where she can work with her hands. A two-year community college program should prepare her for a competitive position in that field, explains Lambert.

"It's a very neat area," Hutto says of her chosen profession. "It doesn't require a lot of communication with patients. And I want to be independent."

There are many positions opening up for the deaf in the medical field thanks to the development of electronic devices, such as a visual stethoscope that shows heartbeat rhythm. The program doesn't have one of those yet - they're very expensive at about \$5,000 - but they have acquired a simulated arm to use in learning to draw blood and inserting IVs. Students learn the basics with digital thermometers, blood-typing kits and anatomical charts. Lambert hopes to get a hospital bed donated, and eventually dreams of building model dentist and vet offices, a laboratory and childcare facility.

AIDB has applied for a federal grant for approximately \$385,000 to fund the program based on 70 percent unemployment rates for persons with disabilities. The program proposes to serve 30 to 40 students per year on campus and another 10 to 20 through other education agencies.

The program will be divided into four phases. It will start with ninth-graders, who will be exposed to medical terminology, professional dress and appearance, as well as employment options with salary and benefits. Phase Two will teach 10th-graders to change bed linens, draw blood, administer injections and to use defibrillators. Phase Three will allow 11th- and 12th-graders to apply the skills

learned to health care work experiences. Students will be placed in positions working 20 hours a week after school and on weekends. In the summer, they will be placed in jobs in their hometowns.

A job coach will be assigned to each student entering the workforce. Job coaches will search out employers willing to hire students. Then they will go to work with them to assist in on-the-job training, as well as to offer support in transportation and money management.

"With experience they gain from class, they can do more at work," Lambert says. "It also will break down some barriers for deaf people. Employers will wonder, 'Can they do it?' They will see, 'Yes they can.'"

Traci Morrow, AIDB nursing director, agrees.


"There's so much opportunity in the medical field. Deaf and hard of hearing students need to know they're just like everyone else. It's hard, but they can do it."

"The Health Sciences Program provides a piece that has been missing at ASD," says ASD Assistant Principal Lynn Hayes. Previous training focused on vocations such as woodworking and agribusiness. The expanding health field magnifies student possibilities.

"This gives them the chance to make early decisions," she states. "It opens up a huge world of opportunities requiring different levels of educational backgrounds, from tech school to med school. And there are always jobs. There is always going to be a need."

Student Shantaye Massey of Eufaula says she has been interested in studying the basics of health and how the health system works and because of the Health Sciences program she is not held back by a limited offering of skills.

That's the whole point of the program, according to Lambert.

"It's good for students to have options instead of being limited," she said. "We have a lot of work yet, but it's worth it for the kids." 





# Up Close and Personal



Bob Crisp

**A**IDB touches more than 12,400 infants, toddlers, children, adults and seniors each year in a continuum of services that proves to be the most comprehensive in the nation. AIDB's story is as diverse as the needs of these 12,400-plus individuals. But amidst all the technology, evaluations, referrals, training and counseling common bonds of friendship and caring form that last for lifetimes. After all, it's not just business, it's personal.

We'll begin our series of stories through the experiences of Tamara Harrison, a speech-language pathologist and member of an Early Intervention team for little Jenna Cox. The journey continues across program and state lines...



# For Love of the Game – and Jenna

By: Tamara D. Harrison M.S., CCC-SLP

It was a chilly November Saturday afternoon. The Levistown League Falls Soccer Club was preparing to play the season's final game. The Forest Green team would be playing the Blue Team. Kelli Cox sat in the stands, watching her daughter, Jenna, Forest Green's #13. Jenna's dad, Tom, was at older brother Jacob's baseball game, a typical scenario for those of us who try to be present for all of our children's activities.

This had been a good experience for Jenna, a relatively new experience. Good exercise with mobility training applied. She was the team morale captain—always cheering, giving the high-five, and supporting her teammates. Despite her visual impairment, Jenna even helped Coach Bill keep stats sometimes. But maybe this was more of a challenge than we realized. This was the last game. The goal for Kelli was just to get through the final hour.

As Kelli watched, a flood of emotions revisited her. These emotions are a very real part of the acceptance process that parents of a child with disabilities experience repeatedly. As children mature and face new milestones, there is great joy. Sometimes these emotions can be gut wrenching.

Like many AIDB families, the Cox's have given Jenna a wonderful life. She has aniridia, a vision condition meaning "without iris," and she has WAGR syndrome. Common to the syndrome, Jenna had cancer when she was 18-months-old resulting in the removal of one kidney and months of chemotherapy.

Jenna and her family have been an extraordinary inspiration. The goal of Early Intervention is to train the trainer so therapy and skill acquisition becomes a part of every minute of everyday events. Kelli became one of the best parent/therapists we've ever taught.

AIDB served this family through the Talladega Regional Center's Early Intervention program. Shortly after transitioning out of our program, the family moved to Pennsylvania where Tom serves as pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Jenna is now a second-grader in a learning support classroom at Manor Elementary School. Yardley, Pennsylvania, is many miles from AIDB, yet we were there in the early days when her family needed us most - when they were first learning how Jenna would and could excel. Words cannot describe the amazing things Jenna has accomplished or our joy in celebrating her success.

But back to the game... The Forest Green team was



down 2-1 in the third quarter. Then Coach Bill put Jenna in the game - she was thrilled. Fortunately, Kelli was wearing sunglasses so no one noticed her tears.

Tensions mounted as the seconds ticked by. Finally Tom and Jacob arrived. The team was positioning the next play... for what... Jenna to attempt to kick for the goal?!

And then Jenna kicked the ball... as it rolled toward the goal, the others cried "Kick it, Jenna - Score!" Jenna Cox tied the game!!!! Cheering erupted from the stands and from both teams as Coach Bill scooped Jenna into his arms. It was as if a championship game had just been won.

The Forest Green team eventually won the game 3-2. Her family was so proud - all of us. Jenna - you keep going for the goal. It has been a privilege to be a small part of your journey.

*For more information on WAGR syndrome go to [wagr.org](http://wagr.org).* 🏠



*State Senator Roger Bedford only sees the possibilities in...*

# Life's Journey of Challenges



Bob Crisp

**R**oger Bedford is serving his fifth term in the Alabama Senate representing the state's 6th District. He's a practicing attorney, Rotarian, and avid outdoors man. He and his wife, Maudie, have a son who is a freshman at Bedford's alma mater, the University of Alabama.

As a State Senator, his life's journey takes him down many different paths, but the most profound tests of faith and strength have come in his personal journeys. The latest challenge came last year when he lost the sight in his right eye due to a condition called toxoplasmosis. Following diagnosis and treatment Roger visited AIDB's Gentry campus and the Low Vision Clinic operated here by UAB to gather information.

"I've recently gone blind in my right eye, and I wanted to return to this school and see some of the technology and ways of learning that are going on here. And, it impressed me greatly," said Senator Bedford. "There is a great tradition of concern here."

Bedford was first elected to the Senate at age 24, turning the required age of 25 just before he took office. He was nearing the end of his second term when he was met with his first personal test of faith.

"In 1989, I was 32 years old and thought I was healthy. I didn't smoke, worked out and thought I would run for Attorney General. Then I started having pain in my back and lower hip," said Bedford. An MRI soon revealed that he had a tumor the size of a sweet potato on his right hip.

He had been through pain before in 1983 when he

broke his neck on Thanksgiving Day and didn't know if he would walk again. For months he wore a halo brace with four screws in his skull. But he finally made it back to the Senate floor. "I went to the microphone, thanked everyone for remembering me in their prayers and said - I want you to know one thing. I'm the only man in government that can honestly say, I've got my head screwed on straight."

"Once I came to grips with the cancer and talked with Maudie about it I said, 'Well, Lord, we're going to whip this cancer.'" Bedford took six months of chemotherapy to reduce the tumor and was told he was in complete remission. But suddenly, night sweats and the pain appeared again. In October, 1989, the cancer reoccurred in an aggressive state and doctors told him there was little they could do.

Roger and Maudie traveled to the Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where doctors recommended a bone marrow transplant. Birmingham doctors felt the procedure too experimental and that he would not live through it.

"When you are faced with challenges, much like AIDB students face challenges, you can accept the diagnosis but learn to deny the prognosis. Through faith you accept the challenge and believe that you can overcome and achieve," said Bedford. "It is the help of our family, teachers and especially the Lord that gets us through difficult times."

Bedford underwent a pioneering procedure at



Anderson undergoing massive doses of chemotherapy. The most painful part, Bedford recalls, came before the procedure began when he hugged his two-and-a-half-year-old son goodbye in the lobby. "I knew there was a chance I would never teach him to read or write or hunt or fish. I learned to have faith in God's healing grace."

Halfway through the transplant, Bedford got an infection – his temperature rose to 105 and he began

bleeding from his eyes. They finally found an antibiotic to stop the infection and he began the long journey to wellness.

Bedford is facing his latest challenge in much the same way – through faith and a search for options. "People shouldn't be embarrassed to ask for help," Bedford said. "AIDB is considered one of the best facilities in the world and can only lead to a better quality of life. ☰"

# An Explosion of Blessings

*An explosion that left a Huntsville man deaf, blind and a double amputee changed his life for the better and gave him the chance to inspire others, which he does every day.*

By Rose Myers

For Milton Anthony, getting assistance from an AIDB Regional Center is kind of like ordering pizza. "He calls me like we're Dominos and he knows it's on the way," said AIDB Huntsville Regional Center Case Manager for the Blind, Issac Beavers.

Anthony, 49, has been blind and deaf since an explosion 24 years ago that took one leg, his left hand, the fingers on his right hand, both eyes, several teeth and left his face pockmarked with gray scars. But what it did not take was Anthony's determination to survive and succeed. He now is an Associate Licensed Counselor earning 3,000 hours of supervised counseling toward becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). He teaches people how to endure chronic pain at the Alabama Pain Center in Huntsville, a job he hopes will become permanent.

Because Anthony can hear with high-amplification hearing aids, Beavers often makes audio tapes of books that Anthony needs to earn his counseling license. AIDB also makes sure Anthony has transportation.

When Anthony teaches pain management classes, he knows what he is talking about. He suffers phantom pain associated with his missing limbs, as well as pain and arthritis from wearing a prosthetic leg. He also has arthritis in his lower back. Chronic pain cannot be cured, he tells classes. Instead, relaxation, proper breathing and releasing stress and tension are key. "The mind is your best tool," he says.

Anthony's best tool for dealing with his disabilities is humor. He laughs about his situation and makes jokes about himself. His father taught him to laugh at himself, and now he realizes how important that is.

"I flavor everything with humor," he said. Students frequently call him an inspiration. "That really makes me feel good. I know what these people are going through. I tell you, attitude is everything."

## A Different Man Before the Accident

Anthony described himself as a high school dropout, anti-social, drug-dependent criminal before his 1982 accident. As a violent motorcycle gang member, he said, "I was so big and bad, I thought I was bullet-proof." In a gang-related incident, he picked up a stunning hand-painted gas tank, assuming it was a peace offering. Instead, the tank exploded and Anthony landed 75 feet away on his head. He woke up three weeks later.

Bob Crisp





He soon realized the extent of his injuries. The only way he could communicate was by people yelling into his ear. Rehabilitation experts said his outlook was grim. "I thought I really was helpless, hopeless and useless." That lasted about eight hours.

Then Anthony remembered his father telling him that as long as he had breath, he could do anything. Right then he made a decision to get an education. He first earned a GED, then a bachelor's in psychology, followed by a master's in rehabilitation counseling.

Anthony moved to Huntsville in 1998 and got in touch with Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), who referred him to AIDB. Handi-Ride, a free bus service for those with disabilities, takes him to work. AIDB and ADRS counselors have helped in countless other ways, ultimately becoming his close friends.

### Not an Accident, but a Blessing

Depression led Anthony to turn back to God, and he started attending church. Getting a ride was difficult so he asked his pastor's wife if she knew anyone who could pick him up. About a year later, her sister, Lynn, became Anthony's wife. Anthony had always wanted a family, and with his marriage, he gained two step-daughters and seven grandchildren. "So I'm blessed with a family," he said.

Thankful his life turned out the way it did, he does not dwell on what he cannot do; instead he is grateful. He believes that if he had not been blown up, he would have died or spent his life in prison.

"This was a blessing," he said. "It was a Godsend. The explosion actually saved my life."

*For an unabridged version of this story, visit [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org).* 🏠

## Turning Life's Challenges into Blessings

By Jennifer Hendrix

Sometimes life presents challenges—some small, some large. Only through faith and commitment do we learn that challenges are given so generously so that we may in turn be a blessing to others.

My story begins eight years ago. Giving birth to twins I was filled with such excitement, but fear soon knocked when my husband, Hank, and I welcomed our girls early. Even rarer than their early arrival, our doctors told us during a routine ultrasound that the girls did not have a dividing membrane. They were given a fifty-fifty chance of survival. Madison and Ansley Hendrix were born at 24 weeks gestation. Both girls weighed a little over one pound.

Breathing on their own at birth was a surprise to us, but after fighting for several hours, both were incubated and remained that way for one month. Due to the oxygen given to save their lives, they are both blind.

Hank and I do not see their "disability" but only their many abilities. Ansley was in the first grade this year (at Alabama School for the Blind) and voted most improved student of the year in her class. She has excelled... and has made A's, B's and a few C's. She loves to read, sing, and play piano where she spends a lot of time composing her own music. It is amazing to watch!

Madison was in the second grade this year and was given awards for achievements in reading and for making the A/B honor roll. And, her class of seven read over 780 Accelerated Reader books! She also enjoys singing and playing the piano and both Madison and Ansley love their little brother Jack, dearly.

The girls have been asked to sing at several functions including Race Fever, AIDB's annual spring fundraiser



at Talladega Superspeedway. At this year's April event, Ansley and Madison shared the stage with NASCAR legends Darrell Waltrip and Ned Jarrett, singing for over 1,600 people. What joy I share with my husband and our family seeing the girls' smiles as they sing!

I have been a personal witness to many miracles within AIDB's walls. Madison and Ansley's accomplishments are a result of the love, hard work, and dedication that faculty and staff provide for all children there. They teach my children, and thousands of others like them, independence, confidence, and the ability to dream - no matter what your challenge in life.

*Jennifer and Hank Hendrix live with their daughters and baby Jack in Chelsea, Alabama.* 🏠



*As 25,000 copies of Sights and Sounds go to press, ASD Alum Richard Wiley watches over production with his own personal...*

# Touch of the Printer's Hands

By Karyn Zweifel

Richard Wiley's eyes don't miss much. Hand him a press sheet and he'll spot a mistake in the blink of an eye. The thunder of the presses is almost overwhelming, but Wiley's concentration is unbroken. An EBSCO Media printing foreman in Birmingham, Wiley has seen dozens of *Sights and Sounds* issues roll off the presses. It is a publication to which he has special ties.

"I went to Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) when I was nine and graduated from Gentry in 1976," he says. "My wife Teresia is a 1975 ASD graduate."

Wiley was born at Ft. Benning, Georgia, the only deaf child in his family. His father was in the service, posted in Hawaii and Tennessee before bringing Wiley to ASD. "I wanted to go to school there," Wiley says. "Everybody signed."

EBSCO Media has become a place where many sign, regardless of how well they hear. Nearly two dozen printers on Wiley's shift communicate with him through American Sign Language. "Richard has helped us be better printers," says Edward Crawford. "It made our jobs easier to learn sign." Wiley was Crawford's foreman before Crawford became pressroom manager.

"I taught him how to print," Wiley laughs, pointing at Crawford.

Wiley's first printing experience was at ASD, working on the school newspaper, *The Messenger*. When Brack Gilliam joined the staff in 1974, Wiley felt almost as experienced as the

young ASD alumnus. "I taught him how to print, too," Wiley jokes.

Wiley began his career at the UAB print plant, and started at EBSCO Media in 1982. "I was promoted to third shift supervisor pressman in 1985," he says. "I worked nights 19 years before moving to day shift supervisor."

The staff of the award winning *Sights and Sounds* appreciates Wiley's skill as a printer, and looks forward to many more years of collaboration with the ASD alum and EBSCO Media. 🖨️



Bob Crisp



*Blind Worker of the Year Ethel Williams planned 26 years ago to earn the title that could make her...*

# Queen for a Day

By Rose Myers

In 1979, a friend invited Ethel Williams to attend a banquet celebrating her selection as Blind Worker of the Year by Alabama Industries for the Blind (AIB). What Williams saw that night changed her life. She watched her friend be honored like a queen. She saw the way AIB treats its employees – from providing transportation to and from work to providing an affordable noon meal. Williams knew that night what she wanted to do with her future.

"I thought that must be the most wonderful thing to be honored with, and they treated her so nice that day," she said. "It excited me. I wanted what she had."

Williams told her friend that night that she would like to work for AIB and become Blind Worker of the Year. That was 26 years ago. Last August, at 58, Williams was honored at her own banquet and made to feel like a queen herself. Essentially, she reached her life's goal, now setting sights on retirement next year. But she has nothing but good things to say about her job.

"I have loved it the whole time," Williams said. "It's been like a paradise on earth."

The praise is mutual, according to AIB Executive Director, Billy Sparkman. "She is an excellent worker and one of those delightful people to be around. She is a very good role model. I hate to see her retire."

Williams was the third child of 11 children, the only one born with a visual disability, which went unnoticed for years. The family raised cotton and corn on a Monroe County farm south of Montgomery, where they lived with Williams' grandparents. Her grandfather assigned her to do housework when she proved a poor hand at hoeing cotton.

"He said I was leaving the grass and taking the plants," she recalled.

In school, Williams was unable to see the blackboard. Her teacher moved her closer, but she still couldn't see. Her cousins would copy work for her, but that caused other students to laugh, she remembered. She began staying after school so no one would see her standing as close as she needed to see the board.

Williams had been in public school for nine years when a doctor examined her and told her parents

about the Alabama School for the Blind (ASB). She moved there and attended high school, where her life changed dramatically. "I didn't feel pressure to hide because everyone was visually impaired like me."

At ASB, Williams learned to cook and sew and took typing, music and chorus. She graduated in 1966, attending Gentry Technical Facility a year later and working in the laundry. She then got a hospital job and recalled walking to Woolworth's everyday for lunch.

That's where Williams was working when she learned about AIB. Visually impaired people who worked there didn't have to walk to work or leave to get lunch. AIB, where about 185 employees are blind or visually disabled, buses employees to and from work. A hot meal is provided everyday. Back then, it cost 53 cents, much less than what Williams was spending at Woolworth's, she remembers.

In 1980, Williams' dream came true. She began at AIB in August learning different jobs and soon realized that it wasn't as dreamy as she had thought. The worst job, she recalls, was folding military kit bags.

"I'd cry a day, fuss a day and curse a day. They were hard to fold and hurt my hands. After two weeks, I quit."

She eventually went back and was relieved of kit-folding duty. "I set out to learn as many positions as I could," Williams said. "Some I learned while I was on break."

As Williams looks back, she talks about people she has gotten to know and places she has been.

Those she works with and the environment she works in could not be better, she said. Co-workers even spend time together away from work. A group traveled to an Atlanta Braves game and attended some plays in Birmingham.

They even took a cruise to the Bahamas in the 1990s. Williams especially loves the company picnic held every year at Shocco Springs for employees and their families. "Had I not been working here, I wouldn't have been able to do things like this."

Williams, whose job now is turning neckties for the presser, plans to spend time with her daughter and granddaughter and hopes to travel after retirement. She has her eye on a trip to Hawaii with a group of seniors, and even suggests going to California wine country "on a manhunt."

She intends to volunteer with AIB retirees, maybe as an effort to repay her employer for taking her to a doctor in Birmingham to treat her heart problems. Even as a volunteer, Williams' attitude will be the same as she has demonstrated through two and a half decades at AIB.

"I'll do whatever they need me to do," she promises. ☸





# Fighting the War at Home

Changes in soldiers' needs and the impact of a war-time federal budget forces the Alabama Industries for the Blind to diversify to stay in the battle for military contracts

By Rose Myers

The United States Army is going casual.

That might be good news if you are a soldier, but for a manufacturer who has spent decades stitching the neckties to top the dress uniforms of the nation's military, it's not so welcome.

As the sole supplier of military neckties since the 1960s, Alabama Industries for the Blind (AIB) used to turn out a million a year. Now the number has dropped to about 300,000 a year. That's because soldiers deployed to the battlefield wear combat fatigues and the trend overall is toward casual dress.

With drop in demand of a major product, what does a manufacturer do to stay afloat? Diversify, of course. That's exactly what AIB is doing with the introduction of new product lines to keep workers working.

"We're trying to diversify so that we're not just sewing and making mops, brooms and brushes," said AIB Executive Director, Billy Sparkman. "The new product lines are much more modern."

Helmet covers for soldiers are now crossing the sewing machines of AIB's 185 blind and low vision employees. A mixture of high-tech and traditional design, the cover is a piece of camouflage fabric in a computer-generated digitized pattern. It features 29 button holes to hold twigs for additional camouflage, just as soldiers have used for decades. It also has several Velcro strips to attach it to a helmet. On the high-tech side, a communications port accommodates wiring or cables from devices built into the helmet. And on the other side, a small flap lifts up to reveal a stitched-on square of "Friend or Foe" tape that can pick up infrared signals used by night vision equipment. The identification chip allows a soldier to be seen by his fellow troops, or it can be covered if needed.



Bob Crisp

The helmet cover has been in testing and development for over a year. The plant expects to make 145,000 over the next year.

Another new development for AIB is the production of ink jet cartridges, which is the first item in two years to be added to the Federal Registry's procurement list. No blind vendor has had this product for sale to the federal government, and AIB expects to produce more than 100,000 in the first year. Sixteen workers will start production, but that number is expected to quickly double or quadruple.

The cartridges are known as "compatibles" because they fit several printer brands. That makes it much more economically attractive to the federal government, said Sparkman, who expects the cartridge to be a big seller in the 126 base supply stores. AIB also expects to market the cartridges to state agencies, looking for buyers all over Alabama and other states.

Sparkman expects 40 new jobs to be created for ink jet production and another 60 for helmet covers.

Another successful product is copy paper, an AIB line started about a year ago. It began as a filler to keep the plant running while government contracts lagged, but took off better than anyone expected. "I never anticipated it would grow as rapidly as it has, but it has been tremendous," Sparkman said. 🏠



### Lockheed Martin Leads Way in Technology Gifts

AIDB has received generous support from a number of sources to expand classroom and Regional Center technology efforts across the state.

The ever developing world of technology is virtually impossible to keep pace with – purchase new equipment and it is replaced with faster and more efficient devices within days. But thanks to the generosity of companies and individuals, AIDB is doing its best to keep up. In fact, the most recent donation by Lockheed Martin “brings AIDB the closest it has been to being up to date since I’ve been Instructional Support and Information Systems Director,” said Henry Segalas.

Over the past two years, Lockheed Martin has donated literally hundreds of desktop workstations, laptops, monitors (especially large screen), docking stations, zip drives and other technology. These gifts have enabled AIDB to develop numerous portable computer labs and place new technology in classrooms and dormitories. Lockheed Martin’s total contributions exceed \$600,000.

“We have found at AIDB, irrespective of the student’s aptitude, the placement of technology has a positive influence on the learning environment,” said Segalas. “Because much of our technology budget must be expended on specialized assistive hardware and software, the offset created by the benevolence of organizations like Lockheed Martin have kept AIDB one of the nation’s leading education institutions for special needs children.

“Words cannot adequately express the value of their gift. We are so grateful to Lockheed Martin’s Charlie Pilgrim and staff and for the leadership of Chip Dobbs in making this a reality,” said Segalas. Dobbs is an AIDB Trustees and NASA employee.

In addition, Assistive Technology Loaner Programs are being developed in the Montgomery and Talladega Regional Centers thanks to a \$35,000 Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services STAR program award. The Brunos Classic Memorial Fund also contributed to this project. Bill and Margaret Ingram have also contributed \$10,000 for Shoals Regional Center technology. And a gift from the HG and HU Sims Foundation, Birmingham, recently supported BrailleNotes purchases for Alabama School for the Blind students.

### Whitfield appointed to Trustees

Rev. John E. Whitfield, Daphne, has been appointed to represent Alabama’s 101st District on the AIDB Board of Trustees.



A graduate of Toulminville (John LeFlore) High School, Mobile, he earned a B.A. in sociology from the University of South Alabama and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army.

He is an Allstate Insurance Licensing Institute graduate and completed owner training with McDonald’s Hamburger University, along with mortgage and housing industries business training.

Rev. Whitfield currently serves as Pastor of New Zion Christian Church in Fairhope and is Program Director for the Baldwin County Homeownership and Property Enhancement. He has owned and operated quick-service and buffet style restaurants in Louisiana and worked in sales and sales management in a number of Mobile area businesses.

He was a community organizer of Ecumenical Ministries of Baldwin County for five years and serves on several boards including Thomas Hospital Home Health, Habitat for Humanity, Eastern Shore Literacy Council and Baldwin County Public Transit Coalition. He has co-chaired the Envision Coastal Alabama’s Equity Team and the Baldwin County Commission’s Affordable Housing Task Force and chaired the Baldwin County Board of Education’s Drug Testing Program Task Force.

### AIDB Hosts Senator Shelby at Town Meeting



Many individuals from the deaf, blind and local communities gathered to meet U.S. Senator Richard Shelby at a Town Meeting at Alabama School for the Deaf recently. Senator Shelby has been instrumental in directing federal funds for AIDB’s state-wide programs. State Senator Jim Preuit also shared the podium with Shelby.



# Major Gifts Support New ASB Center

Through its "Living with Pride Campaign," AIDB is moving ahead with plans to renovate and replace inadequate facilities that do not meet student and program needs. An AIDB Foundation priority is to construct an Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) Independent Living Center. The new 5,000 square foot facility will replace an inadequate building half the size to better emphasize independent living skills for juniors and seniors.

Regions Bank committed the lead gift with recent commitments from Alabama Power Foundation, Daniel Foundation of Alabama, Bailey-Harris Construction and Kiwanis Club of Montgomery.

AIDB Foundation Board member Ronnie Smith, recently retired as vice president for the Eastern Division of Alabama Power Company, said, "Alabama Power is pleased to support such a worthy project and to be part of the outstanding job AIDB is doing in its work with deaf and blind individuals." Alabama Power and the Daniel Foundation each committed \$100,000 to the project.

"AIDB does such great work, and I am just proud to help in this way," said Auburn's Bailey Harris Construction Company President Allen Harris, who pledged \$50,000. Harris also serves as AIDB Foundation Board Finance and Audit Committee Chair.

The Montgomery Kiwanis Club pledged \$25,000 and BR Williams Trucking, Oxford, pledged \$10,000.

"A key ingredient for ASB graduates is to acquire maximum independence in daily living skills," explains ASB Principal Carl Ponder. "While instruction in home economics and other related "life" subjects are taught during the school day, actual hands-on experience is needed in a practical environment."

"We are so grateful for the leadership and support of these organizations and corporations," said AIDB President Terry Graham. "These generous gifts indicate that they believe in our students' ability and potential." 🏠

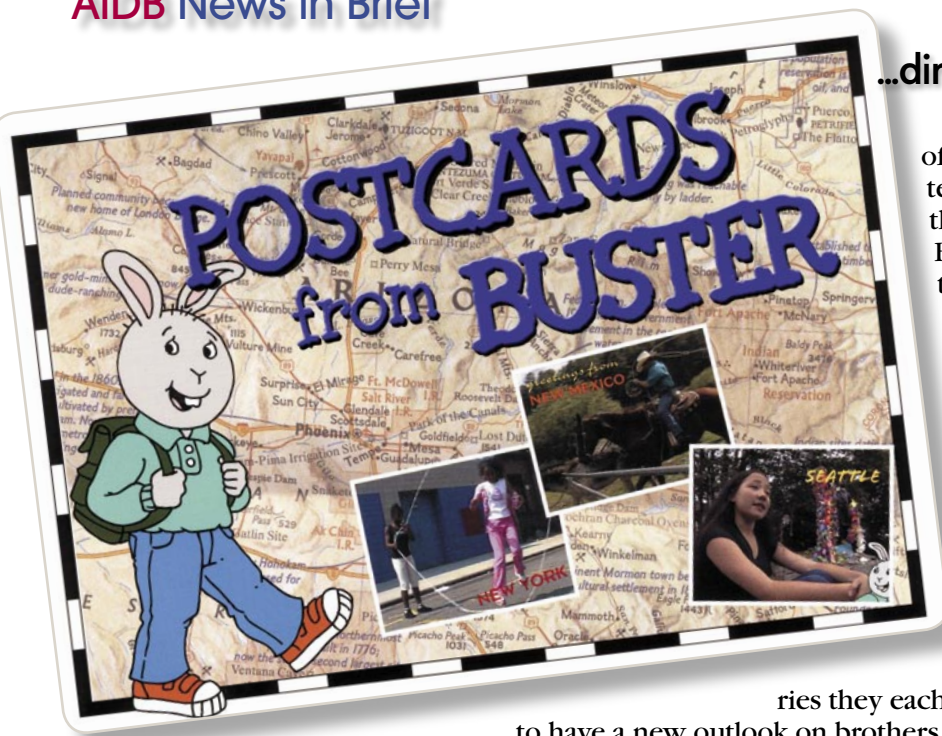


Bob Crisp

*ASB students Kay King and Sabrina Miller (far left) and Kelvin Black and Bradley Moore (far right) celebrate an Alabama Power gift to the new Independent Living Center with Foundation Board President Jeff Gaskin, AIDB President Terry Graham, ASB Principal Carl Ponder, Alabama Power Vice President Ronnie Smith and AIDB Board Chairman Jake Montgomery.*



...direct from ASB via PBS



Maybe you've heard of him - Buster Bunny of PBS television fame? The cartoon character and his real-life film crew travel around the country and send video "Postcards from Buster" to educate kids about their adventures and people they meet.

According to Buster's film crew, during a recent visit to Talladega Superspeedway, Buster was disappointed that he missed the race. As he pretended to drive his own race car around the track, he found an Alabama State quarter. The Braille markings on the coin brought Buster on a search for people who are blind. At the Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) campus, he met two students, Keyanna Maddox and Katie Holman. The girls shared with Buster and his crew their friendship and sibling rival-

ries they each have with their brothers. Buster is certain to have a new outlook on brothers and sisters and how everyone is the same even if they seem a little different.

The PBS "Postcards" series is founded on two important areas, cultural awareness and English language learning - providing lesson plans, recommended books, and much more to help students get the most from Buster's travels.

Buster's Postcards from ASB will be aired on PBS television in Fall, 2006!

# I'LL TAKE GREAT PUBLICITY FOR \$1,000 ALEX....

By Cary Nolen

Quick - A mallet hitting a bass drum at an Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) football game signals what? If you answered "the snap of the football" or "hike," then you would have earned \$600 during the April 10 airing of Jeopardy!

In November, AIDB received a call from the popular game show's producers, indicating they had done their research and wanted to highlight AIDB in an upcoming show. More specifically, they wanted to send their "Clue Crew," a group that travels the globe filming scenes used for video clues.

On AIDB's campuses, children were excited to see the arrival of the Sony Pictures Television crew, which included a Field Producer, his assistant, cameraman, sound and lighting professionals, and two on-air talent specialists. The Culver City, California-based Clue Crew, filmed at ASD, Alabama School for the Blind, Helen Keller School, and the MGH Equestrian Arena. The collective clues filled up an entire "Deaf and Blind" category in the Double Jeopardy segment, and focused on answers ranging from the Blind Boys of Alabama to Taxidermy.

"It was great," said AIDB's Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, Lynne Hanner. "You cannot place a value on this kind of publicity. It is humbling to know that Jeopardy found us. They knew of our reputation and uniqueness in serving deaf, blind, and multidisabled children and adults, and wanted to tell a small part of our story." - Thank you Alex.

FINAL  
JEOPARDY!





## "Boogedy-ing" to Record Year

**R**acing legend and broadcast celebrity Darrell Waltrip stepped to the microphone and encouraged more than 1,600 race fans from 36 states, England and Canada to "let's go racing!" When Race Fever 2006 ended a few hours later, more than \$205,000 had been raised for the AIDB Foundation.

Waltrip joined co-hosts Ned Jarrett, Sonny Smith and auctioneer Phil Barkdoll for the 21st annual Race Fever dinner and auction which is sponsored by Talladega Superspeedway.

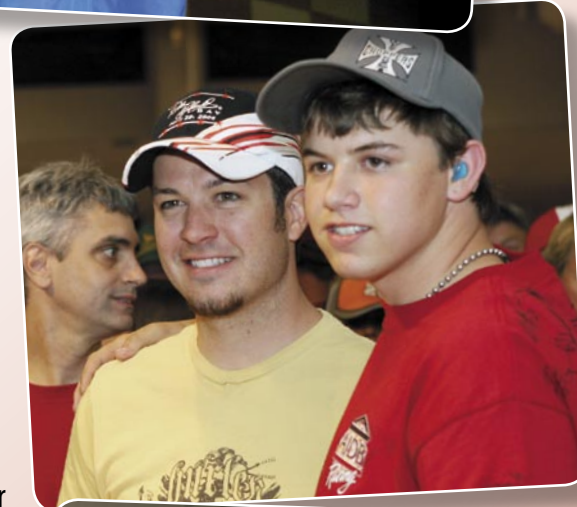
A total of 28 drivers made appearances, with many, like Bobby Labonte, commenting that the AIDB event has become an annual part of their Spring Talladega race weekend. Martin Truex, Jr., Kurt Busch, Kyle Petty, Joe Nemechek, Sterling Marlin, Dale Jarrett, Jeff Burton and many other NASCAR drivers did interviews, signed autographs, visited with AIDB students and fans and donated racing memorabilia for the live and silent auctions.

Martin Truex' Race Fever experience was featured on Speedchannel's "7 Days With" program - Martin Truex, Jr., Tried and Truex.

In addition to entertaining fans, Darrell Waltrip led the way in Live Auction bidding with the purchase of an autographed guitar from the super group Alabama, used in their 2003 American Farewell Tour and autographed by Jeff Cook, Teddy Gentry, Mark Herndon, and Randy Owen. Waltrip also purchased a Home Depot Tony Stewart autographed fire suit!

"Race Fever has become very popular with Talladega fans and was sold out for over two months," said AIDB Assistant Director for Major Gifts, Cary Nolen. "We appreciate so much the support of our sponsors, race teams, drivers and folks at Talladega Superspeedway and NASCAR who embrace what we do at AIDB and help make this event possible."

For information about Race Fever 2007, held on Friday evening of the Spring Talladega race weekend, call 256.761.3317 or visit [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org) or [www.racefever.org](http://www.racefever.org).



*From top: Darrell Waltrip sports "The King's" cowboy hat during the live auction. - Kurt Busch with a young fan. - Martin Truex, Jr. with fans. - Dale Jarrett signs autographs. - All eyes on Tim Sauter. - Ned Jarrett interviews racing legend Janet Guthrie.*





# ASD Best in the State – Again!

By Will Heath, Daily Home Sports Editor

Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) head track coach Bert Haynes had a wild thought while reviewing the banners at Hackney Gymnasium.

“I walked out the other day,” he said, “and looked up. There’s the banner, the last one hung, for the boys, and it’s on the left side of the state flag. I thought, that’d be neat if we could put another one up there.”

Haynes’ boys made sure that spot will be occupied next year at the ASHAA track meet at Oak Mountain in May, scoring 129 team points and winning their second consecutive 1A state track championship.

“It’s a surprise,” Haynes said. “I didn’t expect it, because we didn’t have people in some events. But in other areas, we really stepped up. You don’t know until you get here and do your best.” It’s the third state championship for the Silent Warriors overall, and marks the fourth straight year ASD has finished in the state’s top two.

As usual, the Warriors’ greatest strength was in the hurdle sprints and the relay teams. The Silent Warriors won first place in the 4X100 meter relay, first place in the 4X800 relay and second in the 4X400.

“We won the high jump with Atravise Palmer,” Haynes said. “He was in the top three the last several years; this year he won it, and had his personal best ever of 6-1.” Palmer is a four-year Warrior runner and ASD senior.

“(Junior) Chris Holley is another high achiever and has been so dependable,” Haynes said. “He’s there, he does the very best he can, he practices, he works.”

But the Silent Warriors got some surprises as well. Specifically, from seventh-grader Trey Gordon, who came out of nowhere to finish fourth in the 3200 meters.

“Some people told me later that they saw that and realized he was so young,” Haynes said. “He really did a good job. That’s what you’ve got to have - people you can depend on, but you’ve got to have some surprises, too.”

“Not many programs can win back-to-back, especially not little schools like us,” said Haynes. “We’re just proud to be here, and to have done this again.”

“That’ll be real neat, to have both of those banners hung on either side of the state flag.”

## ASD Hosts - and Wins - Mason Dixon

Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) was privileged to host the 29th Annual Girls’ Mason Dixon Basketball Tournament. When it ended, the ASD Lady Warriors were even more privileged to stroll away with the tournament championship for the second consecutive year. ASD defeated Tennessee and North Carolina to advance to the finals against Florida and Shantaye Massey (pictured) and teammates took the Mason Dixon title with a score of 58 - 30.



(Top) ASD's Atravise Palmer crosses the finish line just ahead of the Winterboro Bulldogs in the 4x100 relay.





# Taylor is Alabama's Idol... As ASB sweeps SCASB Track Competition in Texas

By Lisa Sams

Taylor Hicks may be the pride of the Soul Patrol but Taylor Troha, an up and coming freshman at Alabama School for the Blind (ASB), was the Idol to watch during the South Central Association of Schools for the Blind (SCASB) track meet in Texas. Taylor received the SCASB Most Valuable Athlete in her first year of competition with an individual score of 26 points.

The ASB Redskins dominated the SCASB competition, bringing home both girls and boys championships in track – outdistancing their rivals from schools in New Mexico, Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana.



Photos: Bob Crisp



# Take AIDB's Story on the Road!

## Sign Up Now for Your Distinctive AIDB License Plate

AIDB's application for a distinctive license plate has been approved so now is the time for you to show your support by committing to purchase a specialty tag for your personal vehicles!

There is an additional \$50 fee for the tag, with \$41.25 coming to AIDB for use in supporting dormitory renovations and repairs. But hurry! AIDB must have 250 commitments for purchase by May 31, 2007 for the tag to be approved.

### Here's how you can sign up today...

1. Go to your local county license plate issuing office.
2. Complete a "Commitment to Purchase" application for the AIDB specialty tag.
3. Pay the additional \$50 fee.

You will receive a receipt for the fee and the original copy of the application form. Keep these



documents – you will have to present them at your local tag office again to receive your tag if the 250 minimum commitments are met by May 31, 2007. Until that time, you will continue to use your current Alabama license plate. After the tag is approved, the \$50 fee will be collected annually on your license renewal date.

For more information, visit [www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org) or call 256.761.3207. Thank you for supporting AIDB!



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