



Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

Friday, January 15th, 2021

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent

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Georgia Academy for
the Blind - GAB



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Mission Statement: The Georgia Academy for the Blind provides quality education services to Georgia's students with visual impairments and/or visual impairments in conjunction with other disabilities to prepare them to achieve their highest level of independence in transition to college and career readiness. *Check out this student produced video featuring this Mission Statement:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRrbhkGSe98>

Mark your Calendar

1/15 & 1/18 — Friday the 15th, new holiday added and Monday MLK Jr. Holiday - No Virtual learning

1/22 — Student Council Meeting at 1:00 PM –call in

2/15 — President's Day, Monday Holiday

3/29 through 4/5 — Spring Break Week with Easter Holiday

NATIONAL



B R A I L L E

LITERACY
MONTH

In honor of Louis Braille's 212th birthday, January is National Braille Literacy Month! Here's a few fun facts about braille:

1. Most languages have their own Braille system, braille is NOT a language!
2. Braille was created by Louis Braille when he was just 12 years old. WOW!
3. 6-dot Braille cells have 63 potential combos

This newsletter is published by our Parent Mentor/Family Engagement Specialist, Jennifer Minter. Please send your ideas, news and resources in your community to her: JMinter@doe.k12.ga.us or call **478-262-3303**. ***Please remember to contact her if you've had a change in address, phone number and/or email!***

A message from our Superintendent

Dear GAB Families,

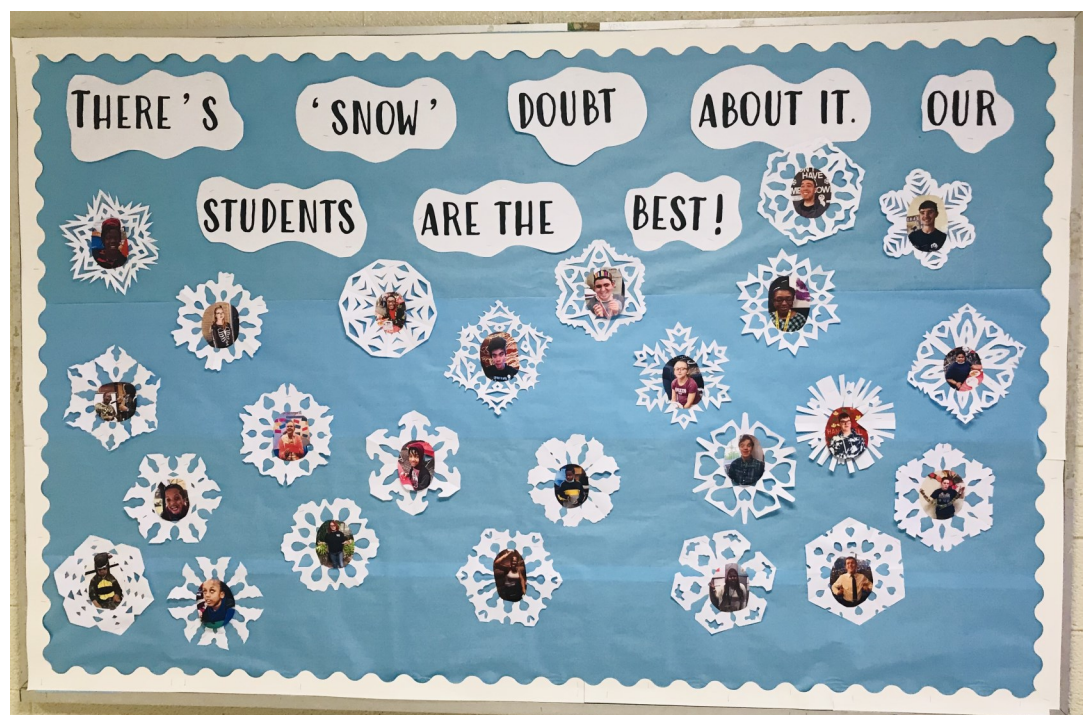
The end of this week brings us to a place that we had hoped to be spared, as we at the Georgia Academy for the Blind have successfully been open for onsite instruction since August 24, 2020. We have provided instructional assistive technology to ensure access to the curriculum. Case Managers and parents/guardians have worked closely together to ensure continuation of services to the best of our ability during this unprecedented challenge. We are totally confident that each family has made the best decisions for serving students this 2020-2021 year. IEP team support is evermore important as students are in environments out of the team's support. Let us know any difficulties with technology or other ways we can intervene during this school-wide virtual instruction time. Be reminded that GAB will be virtual through the month of January. As additional information is available a determination for reopening for onsite instruction will be communicated. We apologize for this inconvenience and assure everyone that all safeguards are utilized to ensure the safety of onsite operation.

Please remember that we will hold our first School Council meeting on Friday, January 22, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. It will be a virtual call-in meeting. These meetings are open to all and provide platform to receive information about GAB and give feedback. The link for the meeting will be sent next week.

Stay safe and healthy.

Always,

Cindy





Georgia Academy for the Blind has successfully completed its international outreach project, Canes for Kenya. This project, incorporating informational collaboration with Ken Medema, a Christian musician, and his organization, Interlude, began collecting gently used mobility canes for South African visually impaired students in September, 2019. Despite school closures for CoVid 19 throughout 2020, GAB became the repository for cane donations from many sources, including parents and students at GAB, the Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology, and Atlanta's Center for the Visually Impaired. Additionally, the GAB Student Council adopted Canes for Kenya as their 2020 spring outreach program. Through their efforts, GAB students and staff were able to purchase breaktime healthy, packaged snacks, providing a \$60 contribution to Canes for Kenya. In November, 2020, 160 mobility canes were sent to a holding facility in Tennessee. From there, they will be shipped to Kenya when CoVid protocols allow. \$260 was also contributed from the Macon community, GAB families, and the GAB Student Council to purchase additional canes and alleviate transportation costs.

Mary Keith, GAB Special Projects, would like to acknowledge the following:

Dr. Cindy Gibson, superintendent at Georgia Academy for the Blind, for her initial approval for Canes for Kenya and strong ongoing enthusiastic support

Ken Medema and Beverly Vandermolen for sharing the need for mobility canes at sister schools in Kenya

Interlude, LLC for providing the organizational structure to transport the canes to Africa

Larry Harris and staff for assisting with cane collection and mailing

Jennifer Minter, Parent Mentor at GAB, for being the on-campus project point person

Adam C. Hinchliffe, Executive Affairs Manager, Center for the Visually Impaired, Inc., for coordinating cane collection at CVI

Zel Murray and staff at the Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology for gathering canes

Robin Cruise for O and M consultations and advice

Deborah Ezell for providing transportation labels

Frank Reynolds for assisting with community canes coordination

GAB Administrative staff for ongoing support

GAB Student Council and sponsors for selling snacks to students and staff during break time last spring

GAB faculty and staff for purchasing snacks and for donating canes

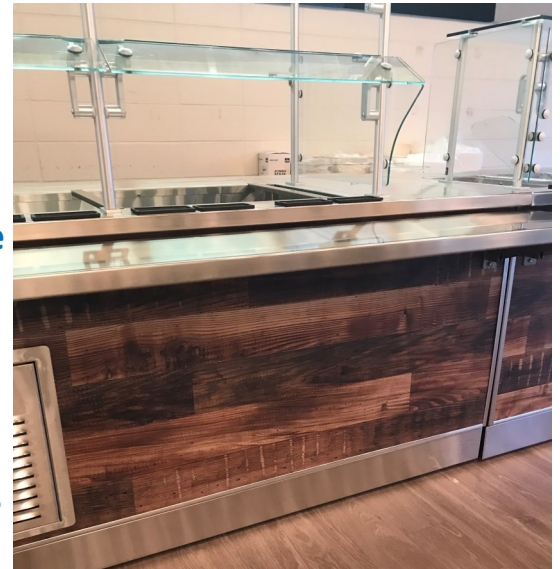
Parents and students at Georgia Academy of the Blind for donating canes and funds

Tom Ridgeway for collecting canes from the community

Georgia TVIs for collecting and delivering canes

Because of your care, concern for others with visual impairment, and collaborative team effort, students in South Africa will now have the opportunity for greater mobility!

A highpoint of the week is the installation of the serving line in the dining hall. The pictures hardly capture the ambiance of this updated facility. Further décor renovations as furniture and lights are coming. Our School Nutrition Staff provides over-the-top services for our students and staff, and the facilities upgrade is important to the GAB experience. Shortly the roofing project for the gym will begin. There will be some inconvenience as we progress, but we assure you student safety measures will be utilized to the hilt.



January Birthdays

1/5	Devoneta	1/24	Ayden
1/8	Madison	1/24	Destiny
1/14	John	1/31	Ian R.
1/21	Brayden	1/31	Jamari
1/23	Morgan		

