

WRAPPING UP 2010 AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2011 • BY TONI BRISTOL

This year has been an incredible year for making vision therapy visible. COVD has either issued a press release or there has been a major article, radio, or TV spot talking about optometric vision therapy every month this year (as of this writing).

We started the year with the opening of Avatar, and our first press release for the year focused on 3D vision and vision therapy. Around the same time, CNN featured an article by CNET editor, Rafee Needleman, "Why I Can't See 3D TV" on their website's homepage that included a quote from COVD President Brad Habermehl:

From the optometrist's perspective, the inability to process stereoscopic imagery is, for many people, a treatable condition. Dr. Brad Habermehl, president of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, told me, "You don't have to be a 3D refugee if you get to the root of the problem. The majority of stereo-blind people really can be helped."

Shortly after this, COVD was contacted by Consumer Reports for more information about 3D vision. After extensive interviews with a variety of people on behalf of COVD and AOA, a blog appeared on Consumer Reports website in February which included the following statement: "Also consider asking about a referral to a developmental optometrist, a practitioner specially trained to help patients improve their visual performance, which can help with tasks such as seeing 3D."

The May 2010 issue of Consumer Reports magazine included the article as well and included the sentence: "If needed, you might consider asking about a referral to a developmental optometrist, a practitioner specially trained to help patients improve their visual performance."

While some may be concerned that this isn't strong enough, keep in mind this is Consumer Reports. This is huge! If someone searches "developmental optometrist" to locate a doctor near them they will find COVD.

In March, the first 3D children's movie for the year was released, "How to Train Your Dragon." The COVD press release was sent out and appeared on a high traffic film review website and a top mommy blog. The headlines respectively were, "Is Your Child Ready for How to Train Your Dragon 3D Movie?" and "3D Movies or 3D TV: Are Your Kids Even Ready?" This is incredible visibility for vision therapy!

Then in April, the NY Times magazine published an article on vision therapy. In May, as I mentioned above, the Consumer Reports Health was published.

COVD issued four press releases for August is National Children's Vision and Learning Month in June, July, and August. Larry Fitzgerald joined our campaign again this year, as well as several M.D.'s who were delighted to have the opportunity to set the record straight about vision, learning,

and dyslexia.

The August campaign wrapped up with a very special webinar, with Dr. Leonard Press interviewing Dr. Susan Barry. The topic was, "School Crossings: A Neurobiologist's View of How Our System Fails Children with Vision Problems." We had almost 250 people attend from all over the world. Over 50% of the attendees were laypeople who found out about the meeting either online through social media channels or by email invitations from COVD members.

Whenever COVD issues a press release, we typically provide you with a members' version of the release so you can send it out to your local media. We continue to have more and more members featured in their local news. The COVD International office sends out email blasts regularly, and always lets you know when a release has been issued. Please make sure you read these email blasts rapidly and jump into action. We are building incredible momentum. Please join us!

You can see all the exciting media about optometric vision therapy on COVD's website in the "In the News" section on the right side of the homepage. Even if you have been looking at it periodically, please review it again as the year comes to a close to see how far we have come.

In preparation for 2011, please make sure you put a system in place to take advantage of the COVD press releases as they come out. Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2011!

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