

Congratulations of the Higher Order

By: Dr John Ravenscroft

One of the roles of being President of ICEVI-Europe that brings me the biggest sense of pride is to celebrate the success of those who are dedicating their career to the education of children and young people with visual impairment. How fortunate I am to be able to do this twice within the first few months of my Presidency.

The first award I would like to celebrate is for Nathalie Lewi-Dumont who is an ICEVI-Europe board member representing the French speaking countries.

Nathalie has been awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur. The Legion of Honour is the highest French decoration one can receive and Nathalie's reward is for recognition of all of her work as an expert in the field of adapted teaching for students who are blind or partially sighted. Nathalie conducted her research in this field, coordinated training for special teachers for the visually impaired, as well as producing various tools for improving literacy and inclusion.

This is a real honour, and I am so delighted that a specialist teacher of learners with visual impairment is being recognised at this highest level. Nathalie, I hope you can all hear us stand up and congratulate you for this most magnificent of awards. Absolutely fantastic!

And here is a picture of Nathalie giving her acceptance speech wearing the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur



Congratulations from all of your friends and colleagues at ICEVI-Europe.

The next award is also international recognition of the amazing work that teachers of learners with visual impairment do. During the last few months it was announced that David Swanston from St Vincent's School, Liverpool, was a top ten finalist in the Global Teacher Prize (Varkey Foundation) [David Swanston \(globalteacherprize.org\)](http://globalteacherprize.org). The Global Teacher Prize serves to underline the importance of educators and the fact that, throughout the world, their efforts deserve to be recognised and celebrated. It seeks to acknowledge the impacts of the very best teachers – not only on their students but on the communities around them. David's innovative approach to teaching children with a visual impairment and dedicated work in developing St Vincent's School's physical education curriculum has received a great deal of recognition. David has been helping children with visual impairments for over a decade, providing them with the necessary skills and tools to navigate a whole range of sports. Many of his students have continued on to participate in further education, employment, and competition at the Paralympic Games.

Just like with Nathalie, I am so proud of this achievement David, at a time where I am concerned about the role and status of the specialist teacher of learners with visual impairment, you go and highlight the importance of the role and the work that TVI's do on a global and international stage. Absolutely outstanding and I hope you can also hear all of our congratulations to you and to your school. Well done David – Magnificent.



We will hear more about David's achievement and his journey through this award process early next year.