



Seminar Presenters



He talks about something he loves

What I do: Tour guide Kevin Hartigan introduces visitors from around the world to the remarkable story of Perkins School for the Blind

Kevin Hartigan gives tours of Perkins School for the Blind to hundreds of visitors annually, including school children, politicians, donors, teachers and more.

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Kevin Hartigan

As Director of Volunteer Services and Tours, Kevin Hartigan gives [tours of Perkins School for the Blind](#) to hundreds of visitors every year. In this "What I Do" blog post, he discusses how much he loves telling stories about the school and its students. This story was compiled and edited by Paysha Rhone.

I get teased that all I do is sit in the lobby and wait for people. I am the director of volunteers services and tours, but mostly I do tours – two or three per day. I may even do four. But if you're getting me on four, I'm probably forgetting what stories I've told!

I have the perfect job. I talk all day. I always say, I'm not the historian – I'm the storyteller. Historians have to document every fact. There are stories (about Perkins) I can't confirm, but I always introduce them as stories. I like stories better anyway.

Every tour is different, which is exciting. We get corporate sponsors, donors, college students, teachers of blind students, families and politicians. People who work with Perkins Solutions building our products in other countries visit, too. I've given a four-hour tour to architects and helped someone just research our bells (in Perkins' famous bell tower).

We get many regular visits from local school children learning about [Helen Keller](#). Fifty percent of visitors come for Helen; she's our big draw. Our president jokes that my wife calls her "the other woman."

Students love our [interactive museum](#), where they can touch the tactile globe Helen used to learn geography. They ask, where exactly did she touch? Charles Dickens, John F. Kennedy and George Bush also touched that globe.

I also take kids to the gym, blindfold them and ask them to run the track. Some walk, some run, some even peek. But if I can get a kid to run as fast as he or she can, that shows them what blind people can do. My hope is someday that kid will be sitting behind a desk when a person who is blind comes for a job. Maybe that person will get the job, because that kid understands what he can do.

Many visitors come with misconceptions (about our students) and leave surprised. That's the core of my tour, to make sure everyone knows our kids are just kids. I talk about our history, but I also talk a lot about what our students are doing today.

I joined Perkins 30 years ago and served as a supervisor in the residential program for 28 years. Now, I get to talk about something I love every day and get paid for it.