



Blind & Low Vision Services Winter 2009 Newsletter

An Eye Opening Experience

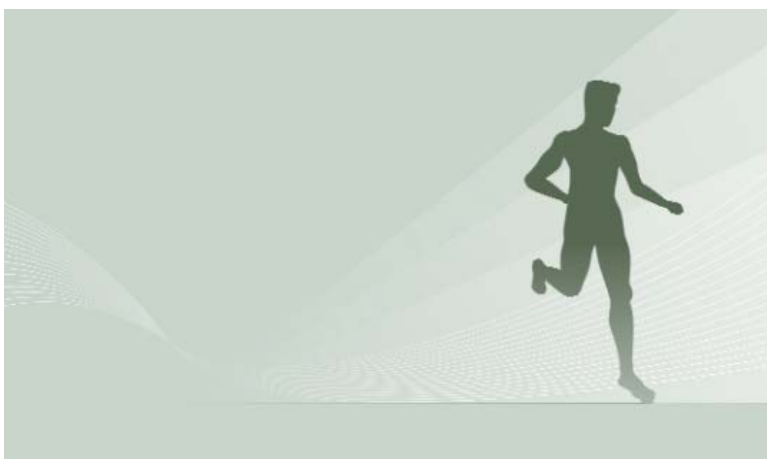
At 19 years old, David* had never seen his mother's face. With his low vision, he was unable to see her blue eyes, her soft features and the dimples in her cheeks when she smiled. When David's mother heard about the services offered at BLVS, she scheduled a Low Vision Evaluation to see if there was any way David could get his driver's license with the use of optical aids.

At BLVS, a comprehensive Low Vision Evaluation is conducted by an optometrist who is specially trained in the field of low vision. After a thorough review of the client's medical history, the optometrist conducts an eyesight evaluation and then prescribes tools to enhance the client's vision such as magnifiers, bioptics, telescopic lenses and other aids.

Through his expert evaluation, the doctor saw the opportunity for David to see better using bioptics, a miniature telescope attached to a pair of glasses. The bioptics were then ordered for David.

Once the bioptics arrived, David came back to the BLVS office to learn how to use his new high-tech glasses. The doctor put the bioptics on David and began to adjust the settings. Suddenly a huge smile came across David's face, starting from one ear to the other. He exclaimed with joy "Mom, I can see your face for the first time!" There was not a dry eye in the exam room that day.

**Name changed for privacy purposes*



Save the Date!

Saturday Morning, Oct. 31, 2009

BLVS' First Annual Race to See

A 5K Race and Fun Run with lots of family activities including a Tot Trot, face painting, costume parade and much more!

A Letter from Joan M. Stuart, Executive Director...

My favorite quote attributed to Helen Keller is “Alone, we can do so little. Together, we can do so much”. I believe this quote reflects the reason why BLVS is successful in providing outstanding services to individuals with low vision or no remaining sight. We value our partnerships and collaborations. Working together, we make a difference every single day.

Our Board of Directors and staff are committed to our mission. We are fully accredited by the National Accreditation Council for agencies serving people with blindness or visual impairment. We have a strong working relationship with Georgia Department of Labor – Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Project Independence – Older Blind Program. We appreciate our partnerships with the United Way in Cobb County, the Cobb County Government and Cobb Community Collaborative. We look forward to expanding community partnerships such as the relationship we are building with Reverend Joey Hatchell and Faith United Methodist Church in Smyrna.

BLVS is able to offer our clients comprehensive low vision examinations because of the high level of skill and expertise of our low vision consulting doctors; with a special thank you to Doctors Jon Forche, Brian Burke and Brandy Hobbs. Rounding out our ability to focus on service delivery programs are the volunteers who help with answering phones, making photocopies and performing other light clerical tasks, helping with bulk mailings, painting and moving furniture, preparing and serving special occasion meals for our clients. Thank you to members of the AT&T Telecom Pioneers, The Pilot Club, employees of United Parcel Service, and the many individuals who participate. Enhancing our client’s group experiences are representatives from the Smyrna Fire Department and Emory Adventist Hospital. Our donors’ support is helping to create a strong financial foundation for BLVS so that we can continue to meet the current and future needs of our clients.

BLVS is strategically positioning itself to meet the increased demand for services from individuals who are experiencing vision loss and want to remain independent. At the core of all that we do is the professional staff of certified vision rehabilitation specialists and certified orientation and mobility instructors. Enhancing our core program is the myriad of partnerships, collaborations, donors and volunteers. Together, we enable individuals with vision loss to function independently. No individual who comes to BLVS will feel alone. Together, we make a difference. And, what an important difference that is. Thank you to all.

Sincerely,
Joan M. Stuart

Annual Fund Honor Roll of Donors

as of 2/19/09

We extend a special thank you to all the donors who have contributed to this year's Annual Fund. Your gifts allow us to continue to provide services to the blind and visually impaired members of our communities. Remember, it's not too late to donate and gifts of every amount are appreciated. Join us as we continue to enhance lives and empower people!

Founders' Club (\$5,000 and above)

Galaxy (\$2,500 - \$4,900)

President's Circle (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Joe Bland
Dr. Dan Tulman

Luminary (\$500 - \$999)

Charyn Darby
Pamela and Michael MacCorquodale
Joan M. Stuart
Rev. Joey Hatchell & Faith
United Methodist Church

Star (\$300 - \$499)

Daceta A. Carty
Deidri L. Cumbie
Marsha Farrow
Diane A. Lumpkin

Beacon (\$200 - \$299)

Nancy Eaton
Drs. Jon and Nadine Forche
Linda J. Newman
Helen A. Schellman
James F. Walters

Beam (\$100 - \$199)

Dorothy M. Bacon
Evelyn H. Campbell
Robert D. Carreker
Elaine S. Davis
Anita Gleimer
Dr. Sue P. Griffin
Mr. and Mrs. John Hawkins

Roger M. Henry
Doris and James Huckaby
Rita and Frank Levine
Phyllis G. McDaniel
Nell Robinson
Harold Lee Smith
Jerry A. Smith
Stephen Stahlman
Clarence Thompson
Grace J. Wertzner

Ray of Light (\$50 - \$99)

Jennifer and Bill Atkins
Denise Bacon
Joan Bell
Roger Dempsey
Jane Finley
George R. Harbin
Elena H. Jennings
June Wolf Jordan
Sally and Phil Kaplan
Ann and Dan Kirk
Mark Laughner
Mary E. Moon
Ann Olson
Donald Parkhurst
Nancy Parkin-Bashizi
Cora Parks
Sarah S. Scott
Stanley and Lyda Sojda
Sheila and Steven Taylor
Sally and Dwayne Thomas
Greg and Kelly Thompson
Kenneth and Jeane Travis
Jean and Ken Wakeling
April and Jerry Weiner
R. Wayne Woodson

Friend (up to \$49)

Eleanor Agan
Andie Albert
Gloria Clanton
Carol Duke
Gloria Fisher
Dr. and Mrs. David Hochberg
Mr. and Mrs. Davis C. Holsenbeck
Mary A. Johnson
Sarah I. Larrea
Eugene Merriman

Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Merritt
Johnnie Moss
Sandra and Sammy Nichols
Helen P. Oakes
Carolyn Pritchett
Bethel F. Taylor
Christa Villacorta
Genie Windholz
Mr. and Mrs. William Prescott
Brenda and Mark Young
Grace J. Wertzer
Ellie Ruth Whelchel

Vision Rehabilitation 101

BLVS recently wrapped up a Group Learning Course, Vision Rehabilitation 101. The course was a five week miniseries which included instruction for those with low vision on the basics of communication skills, cooking techniques, home management, medication labeling and more.

The group allowed the members to connect with their peers and learn as a team. One of the group's members mentioned that she missed cooking. Living in an Assisted Living home,

she does not have the opportunity to cook anymore.

This gave the group the idea of a cooking party. With the instruction from the Certified Vision Rehabilitation Teacher (CVRT), the group made sugar cookies from scratch. After the dough was made, the group cut out the dough into holiday shapes, baked the cookies, paying close attention to the safety instruction from the CVRT, then decorated the cookies with frosting.

The cookies were put into gift bags and handed out to other clients at the BLVS Holiday Party.

More Vision Rehabilitation Group classes are starting now. For more information, contact Gloria Fisher at 770.432.7280 or gfisher@blvsgeorgia.org.



The Charyn Darby Legacy Society

The BLVS planned giving program has been named **The Charyn Darby Legacy Society**. Charyn is one of the organization's most ardent supporters. She is the immediate past-Chair of BLVS' Board of Directors. Elected to the Board in 1996, Charyn served as Chair from 2000 to 2007. She is owner of North Georgia Trophy and Engraving in Smyrna.

Created to recognize and encourage donors who make a provision for Blind & Low Vision Services in their estate plans, the planned giving program is now known as the Charyn Darby Legacy Society. Last year, Charyn donated a beautiful Recognition Tree Sculpture to our organization to enable the agency to place names of annual donors on leaves and stones in recognition for their support of our mission.

The Pilot Club Delivers Joy to BLVS Clients

The Pilot Club of Marietta, a volunteer service organization committed to helping people in need and make the world a better place to live, prepared a wonderful holiday meal for our clients at the 2008 Holiday Party. We would like to thank each and every one of the wonderful club members for their hard work and dedication!



Continuing Education for BLVS Teachers

Recently, a team of BLVS teachers attended the annual ASERT/MACRT (Association of Southeastern Rehabilitation Teachers/Mid-American Conference of Rehabilitation Teachers) conference in Birmingham, AL. Our teachers are constantly learning new techniques and catching up on the latest advancements in low vision technology. Nancy Parkin-Bashizi, Certified Visual Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT), Lori Reber, Access Technology Instructor and Andrea Taylor, CVRT in training, participated in various sessions that covered such topics as new advances in lighting and technology, techniques for teaching basic rehabilitation skills and an eye-opening session on working with clients who have had a traumatic brain injury.

The staff also participated in a Mississippi State University sponsored forum on transition, where they and other professionals from around the Southeast shared their thoughts on how transition services could be more effectively provided to people who are blind or visually impaired. "We hope to use some of the things that were shared in this session to help us improve our transition services at BLVS," stated Nancy Parkin-Bashizi.

Batter Up!
Blind & Low Vision Services
is proudly sponsoring
(thanks to an anonymous donor)
a Smyrna Little League team!
Go Team BLVS!

EYE ON IT

Current Industry Trends

New technology for your cell phone:

An award winning technology is available for you if you cannot read the screen on your cell phone. Mobile Speak takes the information on your phone and converts it using text-to-speech (TTS), delivering the information on your screen to you through synthesized speech!

For the visually impaired who want to read on the run - the knfbReader Mobile allows the user to read mail, receipts, handouts, etc. anywhere they happen to be. This application runs on a multifunctional cell phone that takes a picture of whatever the reader wants to see and converts it using text-to-speech (TTS). A great tool that fits in your pocket!