Center for VISION LOSS

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

CELEBRATING ONE VISION

Several years ago we began a process to create one vision for two agencies which had been serving the blind and visually impaired residents of Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties. Now, at the beginning of 2011, we are proud to celebrate our 1st anniversary as the Center for Vision Loss and 82 years of service built on the legacy of the Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired and Visual Impairment & Blindness Services.

During the past year we were very fortunate to have Stephanie Olexa join us as our new and very talented Executive Director. Stephanie is dedicated to building an agency around one vision focused on our clients. With her leadership we have been aligning our programs to better serve our clients and reaching out to the community to build alliances and collaborative partnerships to enhance our services. A very dedicated staff remains focused on bringing the best to those we serve and the statistics shared in this Annual Report 2009-2010 show that our efforts remain strong.

As always, we could not accomplish our work without the help of those in the community who are passionate about our mission. Thank you for honoring the Center for Vision Loss with your gifts of time, talent, and financial support.

David A. Pike and Robert Ricci
Board Co-Presidents

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Did You KNOW?

National statistics indicate that every 7 seconds someone in the United States becomes blind or severely visually impaired either as the result of an accident, a health concern or an age-related eye disease such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma or cataracts.

When I was appointed Executive Director of the Center for Vision Loss in December, 2009, I was honored to have the opportunity to build on the strong foundations established by the dedicated staff and directors of the Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired in Lehigh County and Visual Impairment & Blindness Service in Northampton and Monroe Counties since 1928. I also knew that the creation of one vision would be a challenge.

I believe that the information shared in our Annual Report 2009-2010 shows that the Center for Vision Loss can celebrate that one vision with great pride. Over the past year we reviewed our service delivery needs, increased our outreach to clients and customers, built new collaborations with related agencies and enhanced our service offerings to meet the growing and changing needs of our community. We also had to make some tough decisions.

I am proud to say that the Center for Vision Loss is the only non-profit agency in the region dedicated to improving the lives of people with vision loss. This pride is the result of the hard work of our staff and volunteers and would not happen without our friends, supporters and donors in the community. Truly our one vision has taken root.

Stephanie Olexa, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Did You KNOW?

According to research compiled by the Americans With Disabilities Act to mark its 20th Anniversary in July, 2010, 1.8 million people 15 and older in the United States report being unable to see printed words.

CENTER FOR VISION LOSS STAFF
Stephanie Olexa, Ph.D., Executive Director
Karen Z. Huetter, Development Director
Donna Shurilla, Director of Program Services
Cynthia Starner, Monroe County Branch Manager
Andrew Swantak, Business Administrator

LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES
Ruth Asmus, Prevention of Blindness Coordinator
John Balantincz, Driver/Maintenance
Nancy Bruno, Eye Care Clinic Assistant/Receptionist
Lori Delgado, Optician/Eye Care Clinic Manager
Sheila Demeter, Eye Care Clinic Assistant/Receptionist
Gretchen Evans, Caseworker
David Ference, Second Sight Thrift Shop
Raquel Gill, Receptionist
Stephanie Houck, Administrative Assistant
Christopher Klotz, Computer Instructor
Patti Martin, Second Sight Thrift Shop Manager
Shirley Moyer, Transportation Coordinator
Bill Pike, Prevention of Blindness Coordinator
Kate Pobuda, Development Assistant
Lisa Mory, Caseworker/Low Vision Coordinator
Richard Solomon, Driver
Andrea Valentine, Caseworker
Jeremy Void, Visual Aids Technician

MONROE COUNTY
Cynthia Starner, Branch Manager
Suzanne Jastrzemski, Driver
Michael Mandile, Driver
Nell Mayotte, Caseworker
Nichole Miller, Optician
Carla Nemeroff, Caseworker
Mary Lou Phillips, Receptionist

ASSOCIATES
Kristen Roseman, OD
Anthony J. Silvetti, OD
James Van Horn, Sr., MS, MA, NOMC

On January 1, 2010, the Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Lehigh County, and Visual Impairment & Blindness Services, Northampton and Monroe Counties, consolidated operations. The Annual Report 2009-2010 reflects consolidated client and customer services statistics and other important information as they were recorded on June 30, 2010. During this year of "Celebrating One Vision," Center for Vision Loss touched the lives of 17,820 people with the following four areas of ***PROGRAMS AND SERVICES***

1 The Center for Vision Loss is the region's only non-profit agency dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by severe vision loss. Often this loss of vision is accompanied by many emotions and uncertainties – How will I get to the doctor, do my banking, go grocery shopping or live in my own home if I can't see well? The agency offers a wide variety of ***CLIENT SERVICES*** to help restore each person's independence and quality of life to the greatest extent possible. These services include education, direct support services such as reading mail and writing checks, door-through-door Escorted Transportation to essential appointments, referrals for Orientation and Mobility and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy and support and activity groups.

CLIENT SERVICES: 1,949 Clients
882 Clients, Lehigh County; 887 Clients, Northampton County; 180 Clients, Monroe County

ESCORTED TRANSPORTATION: 300 Clients
69 Clients, Lehigh County; 162 Clients, Northampton County; 69 Clients, Monroe County

2 Low vision is the sight that remains after a person's vision can no longer be corrected. In the ***LOW VISION CLINIC***, Anthony Silvetti, DO, our low vision specialist, conducts a special exam to evaluate the level of the customer's remaining vision and asks them how they wish to use their remaining sight. Based on their answers, the doctor will suggest various kinds of adaptive technology that can maximize independent functioning. Aids such as video magnifiers, TV glasses, sun lenses, hand-held magnifiers and other devices are often helpful to restore functional ability in a variety of ways. Many of these devices can be purchased in the agency's low vision aids shop.

LOW VISION CLINIC: 175 Customers
100 Customers, Lehigh County; 75 Customers, Northampton County

3 Individuals who are un/underinsured often cannot afford to make corrected vision a priority in their lives – their limited funds must be used to buy food, pay the rent or mortgage, or seek critical medical attention. Kristen Roseman, OD oversees the agency's two ***EYE CARE CLINICS*** which provide top quality, low cost eye exams and glasses for children and adults who are low income or have no health care insurance or vision coverage.

EYE CARE CLINICS: 1,060 Customers
20 Customers, Lehigh County; 516 Customers, Northampton County; 524 Customers, Monroe County

Did You KNOW?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that vision disability is the single most prevalent disabling condition among children.

4 ***COMMUNITY OUTREACH*** extends the agency's Prevention of Blindness activities to all residents of our communities. VISION SCREENINGS conducted at pre-schools, day care centers and schools help identify eye problems in children as soon as possible. Adults are also screened at health fairs and other community venues. The agency is a member of the St. Luke's Partnership for a Healthy Community: Vision Initiative. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS about eye health and eye safety are offered for business and community groups, at health fairs and other locations.

VISION SCREENINGS: 9,313 Children and Adults
5,231 Children and Adults, Lehigh County; 2,963 Children and Adults, Northampton County
1,119 Children and Adults, Monroe County

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS: 5,323 Children and Adults
409 Children and Adults, Lehigh County; 3,335 Children and Adults, Northampton County
1,579 Children and Adults, Monroe County

VOLUNTEERS

The Center for Vision Loss could not accomplish its work in the community without the help of volunteers. Our 85 member volunteer corps drove clients to appointments and agency activities, worked as sales associates in our Second Sight Thrift Shop, brailled documents, assisted in the office with mailings and receptionist duties, helped with special projects and fundraisers and provided leadership as members of the Board of Directors, Endowment Board, and various committees.

STATEMENT ABOUT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Center for Vision Loss wishes to thank the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, Foundations and Grantors, Special Event Sponsors, Lions Clubs of District 14-K and District 14-U, Donors of Goods and Services, and all of the Community Friends who provided financial assistance to make our programs and services possible in Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties in 2009-2010. The Center for Vision Loss is also a member agency of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and the United Way of Monroe County.

OUR MISSION

To provide a comprehensive set of preventative, rehabilitative, support and social services enabling blind and visually impaired clients to achieve their personal goals and restore quality of life consistent with those goals. Programs will provide a balance of independent living skills and social services to meet individual needs across a diverse client base and also help reduce the incidence of vision loss in the community through prevention of blindness and remedial eye care services.

Serving Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley

United Way of Monroe County

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