

# in

# sight

Spring 2016

## 2016 Board of Trustees

Cathy Sheets - Chair  
Michael Spahr - Vice-Chair  
Eileen Kerner - Secretary  
Diane Ohns - Treasurer

Judy Anderson  
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Karen Culler  
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Angela Jackson, O.D.  
Randy Schimmoeller  
Jennifer Scroggs  
Jeffery Stephens, M.D.  
Jeff Szymanski  
John Tooson IV

Stacey Butts, Executive Director

*InSight is published periodically &  
is written by agency staff.*

*This publication is available  
in alternate formats.*

## Mission Statement

**We empower independence &  
enrich the lives of people who are  
blind or visually impaired.**



**The Sight Center**  
of northwest ohio

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Toledo, Ohio 43614

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[www.sightcentertoledo.org](http://www.sightcentertoledo.org)

**We don't change vision. We change lives.**

## Indoor Navigation Is Here

### ***The Sight Center Equipped as AudibleEye Demonstration Site***

Thanks to advances in technology, it is easier than ever to travel with a vision impairment. Many devices and smart phone applications can tell you where you are and how to get somewhere else, but once you enter a building it is a different story...until now!

Local entrepreneur Jarrod Witt has developed AudibleEye, a mobile application that provides blind and visually impaired individuals with indoor navigation. AudibleEye will work in buildings equipped with special bluetooth beacons.

The Sight Center will be the first fully equipped building and will serve as a demonstration site for AudibleEye. Sight Center visitors who download the app will "hear" where they are inside the building, helping them find offices, meeting rooms, restrooms, and The Shop, the new retail store at The Sight Center. According to Mr. Witt, the goal is to equip more public buildings with the AudibleEye beacons, increasing accessibility for people who are blind or visually impaired. Hospitals, airports, and college campuses are just a few examples of ideal sites for AudibleEye.

Mr. Witt, a Toledo resident and recent graduate of Bowling Green State University, initially received support for his concept at The Hatch, a BGSU "shark tank" event held during the school's Entrepreneurship Week. Prior to unveiling the official version at The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio, the prototype AudibleEye app was tested at Bowling Green State University's College of Business and at The Cleveland Sight Center.

*AudibleEye™*

▶ *To experience AudibleEye, download the app from the iTunes Store and visit The Sight Center at 1002 Garden Lake Parkway in Toledo.*

# The Scroggs Legacy

## *Leadership That Is Making a Difference*

Few board members of any nonprofit organization can make the claims that Jennifer Scroggs can about her tenure on the Board of Trustees for The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio. And, since Jennifer isn't the type of person to make those claims about herself, we would like to do it for her.

Initially drawn to The Sight Center mission by her early childhood experience of having a grandmother who was visually impaired, Jennifer joined the Board in 2007. On January 1, 2016, Jennifer began her ninth and final year on the board and earned a well-deserved break after having served an unprecedented three year stint as Board Chair.

Leading The Sight Center Board is not all she's been doing. In addition to serving on other non-profit boards, Ms. Scroggs works as Vice President of Fifth Third Private Bank Personal Trust. After work she heads home to her family, which includes her husband of eight years and her two young children, both of whom were born during her time on the board. Through it all Jennifer has never let her personal and professional commitments keep her from leading The Sight Center through the many challenges that have arisen.



Her leadership as Vice Chair and Chair of the Board helped The Sight Center develop new funding sources in response to major decreases from traditional funding partners including the State of Ohio and United Way of Greater Toledo. New collaborations began with the Cleveland Sight Center and Interlink, an agency that serves people who are deaf that now resides in The Sight Center's building. The EyeEvent, a major fundraising gala, is now in its fifth year. The Eye-Cee event, a continuing education program for eye care professionals is also in its fifth year. And the most recent addition is The Shop at The Sight Center, a new retail space set up within a simulated apartment, which showcases low vision devices, talking products, and handy gadgets that maximize independence for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Additionally Ms. Scroggs successfully led the Board and organization through a major leadership transition, which included the retirement of long-time Executive Director Dawn Christensen, the development of a new strategic plan, a nationwide search for a new leader, and the selection of the current Executive Director Stacey Butts.

### **Breaking News!**

**Jennifer Scroggs has been selected as a finalist for the Toledo Jefferson Awards!**

Jennifer Scroggs has a right to be proud of the role she has played at The Sight Center, but she is too humble to think in terms of legacies. Rest assured that The Scroggs Legacy does exist and it can best be seen in the new energy at The Sight Center, an energy fueled by a bold strategic plan, a visionary board, and a new Executive Director who leads a team that is willing to do whatever it takes to empower the people we serve.

# New Officers & Trustees Lead the Way in 2016

2016 is the start of a new era for The Sight Center Board of Trustees. Chair Cathy Sheets will be leading an energized board that includes a new team of officers and several new Trustees.

## 2016 Sight Center Executive Committee

Chair Cathy Sheets, Plante Moran  
Vice-Chair Michael Spahr, The Andersons, Inc.  
Secretary Eileen Kerner, Kerner, LLC  
Treasurer Diane Ohns, The Trust Company

## New Trustees

Judy Anderson, Gilmore, Jasion & Mahler  
Anthony Burek, Riverbank Wealth Management  
Karen Culler, Kingston Healthcare  
Angela Jackson, O.D., Quality Family Eye Care  
John Tooson IV, Brooks Insurance

## Returning Trustees

Laurie Gross, Gross Electric  
Randy Schimmoeller, ProMedica  
Jennifer Scroggs, Fifth Third Bank  
Jeffery Stephens, M.D., Vision Associates  
Jeff Szymanski, Toledo Optical

## Well Done!

Special thanks go to the following members of The Sight Center Board of Trustees who retired from the Board at the end of 2015:

**Suzi Hahn**

**Dr. John Archer**

Thank you for your years of service, support, and commitment!

## Dark Dinner on Menu at 5th Annual *EyEvent* April 27 at 6 PM at The Premier Banquet Hall

Our 5th Annual EyEvent Gala is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at The Premier in Toledo. The theme, "Dining in the Dark, An Evening of Taste, Sounds and Touch" will offer guests an exclusive opportunity to experience a "sensory smorgasbord" while relying on non-visual techniques and the other four senses. Guests will enjoy a portion of the dinner guided by a Sight Center Vision Rehabilitation Specialist in simulated darkness. Other highlights include a Celebration of Success, Photo Booth, Live & Silent Auctions, and much more! For tickets, call 419-720-3937 or visit <https://eyeevent2016.eventbrite.com>



PROMEDICA



Special thanks to Brooks Insurance, Gross Electric, Kingston Healthcare, Mail It, Quality Family Eyecare, and Toledo Optical, for providing additional support for this event!

# Award-Winning Partnership

## *Working Together For Employment Opportunities*

Maumee-based MaritzCX recently received the Champions of Opportunity Award from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), the state agency that helps Ohioans with disabilities achieve quality employment and independence. The award, which was announced in December, recognizes companies that serve as statewide examples of the OOD mission. According to Krista Haley, MaritzCX HR Manager, the company is proud to have a diverse workforce that includes several Sight Center clients who work in the MaritzCX call center.

The Sight Center's Assistive Technology Specialist Ethan Holliger has provided technical expertise to the MaritzCX team to ensure each person has the computer environment they need to do their jobs. Screen-reading software customized for the company's applications combined with ongoing training has been a formula for success.

According to Cindy Shunk, MaritzCX Call Center Specialist and Sight Center client, "Having the right tools makes it much easier to do the job and do it well." Cindy has already been rewarded for her job performance and said "I can't wait to go back tomorrow."

Ms. Haley expressed that MaritzCX truly believes each person has different capabilities and something to offer. "Everyone does better when they have tools and training that is tailored to them" she said. Regarding the award, Ms. Haley went on to say "It's not just our effort. It's OOD. It's The Sight Center. It really is a team effort."



► *To learn more about employment opportunities, contact Christopher Lopez, Vocational Coordinator for The Sight Center, at 419-720-3937 extension 102 or [clopez@sightcentertoledo.org](mailto:clopez@sightcentertoledo.org)*

## Welcome New Staff Members

### **Christopher Lopez**, Vocational Coordinator



Christopher joined The Sight Center staff on January 4, 2016. Christopher has a strong vocational background and work experience in Job Development and Job Coaching. He also brings a diverse background in case management and residential treatment for dually diagnosed individuals. Christopher will help expand The Sight Center's ability to connect clients to meaningful and rewarding employment opportunities

### **Laura Nowak-Bohland** , Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant



Laura joined The Sight Center staff in January 2016 as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant; COTA/L. This Toledo resident's favorite part of her new job is interacting with her client's and helping them out with their activities of daily living through adaptive trainings and techniques.

*[Staff continued on page 5.]*

# The Shop Celebrates 1st Anniversary

## *More Than a Store, The Shop is a Doorway to Hope*

When the door to The Shop at The Sight Center first opened on March 31, 2015, the goal was to make it easier for people who are blind or visually impaired to get the tools that help them live independently. Stocked full of magnifiers, specialty lamps, handy gadgets, high-tech devices, talking products, and so much more, The Shop quickly became a destination for many who live with permanent vision loss.



We soon learned that the door to The Shop didn't simply lead to products. It also led to hope. As people began to drop in to buy a magnifier for mom, a talking clock for dad, or a new tip for their own white cane, they started to see all the possibilities and options that people with permanent vision loss have available to them. A simple transaction often led to a broader conversation about how others are working, learning, playing, and living without the sight most people take for granted.

Since The Shop is located inside The Sight Center, customers can tap into the collective experience, knowledge and compassion of The Sight Center staff. These dedicated "Shopkeepers" can help turn a needle-threader and magnifier into a renewed passion for needlepoint, and a talking meat thermometer can

be the spark to ignite the dormant flames of a former chef.

Located in a simulated apartment, The Shop offers products which can be tested in real-life settings and demonstrated on actual household devices. The Sight Center staff who work in The Shop have become trusted resources for many clients looking for creative solutions to everyday challenges.

As we prepare to blow out the first candle on The Shop's cake, join us in spreading the word so more people can find the door, and the hope, that The Shop and The Sight Center offer!

► *The Shop is now accepting donations of used CCTVs*

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## ***New Staff (Continued)***

**Tim Tegge**, Development Coordinator

Tim Tegge joined The Sight Center staff in November 2015 as Development Coordinator. As a former Sight Center client and former Board of Trustee member, Tim brings a unique perspective to this integral position. This Bowling Green resident's favorite part of his new job is sharing the real life stories that help people understand what it's like to live with a serious vision impairment.



# State Forced to Cut Homemaker Program

## *The Sight Center Responds to the Challenge*

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law in the summer of 2014 by President Obama. Once the WIOA regulations were finalized, Ohio's Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) determined that it will no longer be able to continue the longstanding Homemaker Program. This popular program, which has been in place for decades, provided services for people age 55 and under who are not vocationally oriented and who serve as the primary homemaker.

Through this state program, The Sight Center has helped provide rehabilitation therapy, mobility training, and assistive technology services to more than 36 residents in 2015 alone. Amy Rhoads is an example of the program's impact.

Diagnosed at age 7 with a degenerative eye condition called Rod-Cone Dystrophy, Amy eventually lost nearly all of her sight along with her confidence and independence. Through the Homemaker Program, The Sight Center empowered Amy to adapt to her new reality by showing her different ways to cook, clean, do laundry, and stay organized without her sight. Today, Amy home schools her son, maintains the family calendar, prepares shopping lists, and is once again exploring her passion for cooking and baking.

In response to the new challenge, The Sight Center will focus its recently created Empowerment Fund on the target of continuing to provide homemaker services. Money raised during the 5th Annual EyEvent on April 27 will be designated for this purpose.

Stacey Butts, Executive Director of The Sight Center, said "The elimination of the state's Homemaker Program will not decrease the demand for these services." Alluding to the agency mission, she added that "We will do whatever it takes to continue empowering independence for people who are blind or visually impaired."

► *To contribute to The Sight Center Empowerment Fund, contact Tim Tegge, Development Coordinator, at 419-720-3937 x 105*

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## Events & Activities

**A Novel Eye-dea Book Club:** If you enjoy a good book and would like to have an opportunity to talk about them, please join us for our book discussion, which covers a variety of genres and interests. The group meets the third Friday of the month from 1-2 PM at The Sight Center.

**Annual Clothing Drive** – Donate clothing, coats, bags, and more on Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7 (from 8-2). Early donations accepted. Call 419-720-3937 with questions.

**The Guide Dog Foundation** will visit the Sight Center Friday, June 24th from 11 AM to 2 PM to talk about what it means to have a guide dog, what skills a person should have before getting a dog, the training process for the individual and the dog, the lifestyle of guide dogs, and much more.

► *To get connected to peers with similar interests, call Jill Hunt at 419-720-3937 x114*

# Joe Nauman Receives First Fatima Shouser Educational Award

On January 19, the first Fatima H. Shouser Educational Fund Award was presented to Joe Nauman, a junior at Bowling Green State University. Mr. Nauman, an Eastwood High School graduate and Luckey resident, was selected for the combination of his academic credentials, volunteer service, athletic achievements, community involvement, and a strong determination to live independently with a vision impairment. Born with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, a medical condition arising from the underdevelopment of the optic nerve, Joe aspires to become an intervention specialist and special education instructor. He is committed to being a strong advocate for his future students to ensure they have the accommodations they need to succeed. In his free time, Joe volunteers at Eastwood High School as the assistant wrestling coach and is a certified Ohio High School Athletic Association official for the sport of wrestling.



*Joe Nauman Receives Award with Fatima Shouser*

The Fatima H. Shouser Educational Fund, created in honor of Fatima Shouser, educator, advocate and role model for visually impaired students in the Toledo Public School District and throughout Northwest Ohio, was established in 2014 by her family as a tribute to her personal life and professional career. Born with a vision impairment and diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) as a teenager, Fatima has never allowed her vision loss to deter her from achieving her goals in life. In 1989, Ms. Shouser began her career with Toledo Public Schools where she has served as primary educator, resource instructor, advocate and role model. The majority of her career has been at Rogers High School where she has focused on the academic needs of students with severe vision impairments.

Stacey Butts, Executive Director of The Sight Center, says, "Future students will benefit from the newly created Educational Fund as well as from Fatima's integrity, knowledge, and passion for limitless options regardless of visual ability."

► *Forms are now available for the 2016 award. The application deadline is May 31. Contact Tim at [ttegge@sightcentertoledo.org](mailto:ttegge@sightcentertoledo.org) or at 419-720-3937 ext. 105.*

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## New Group for Working Age Adults



This new peer-to-peer networking group will be a forum for members to hear from guest speakers and to discuss workplace challenges, adaptive techniques, successful solutions, transportation barriers, and job-seeking strategies. This self-directed group will meet the first Thursday each month at 10-11 AM and 6-7 PM. The First meeting will take place on May 5. Questions? Call Christopher Lopez at 419-720-3937 x102.



1002 Garden Lake Parkway  
Toledo, Ohio 43614

The Sight Center  
of northwest ohio

[www.sightcentertoledo.org](http://www.sightcentertoledo.org)

## Get Involved!

To learn about  
events, activities &  
meetings, call the

## Event Line

(419)

214-3459



The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio presents the 5th Annual



*EyeEvent*



*"Dining in the Dark,*

*An Evening of Taste, Sounds And Touch"*

Wednesday, April 27th, 2016

### *Tickets*

\$90 Per Ticket

Sponsorships Available

*To purchase ~ Visit or Call*

<https://eyeevent2016.eventbrite.com>

The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio

(419) 720-3937

Silent & Live Auction

Special Dining Experience

Celebration of Changing Lives

6:00 P.M.

The Premier

4480 Heatherdowns Blvd.

Toledo, OH 43614

We empower independence and enrich the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.