

insight

Fall 2017

The King And Eye

Lima Man Helps The Sight Center See A Brighter Future

When Jacob King attended The Sight Center's presentation on his Rhodes State College campus back in November 2015, he had no idea it would change history. King (photo left), Assistant Professor of Humanities at the Lima-based institution, is visually impaired.

After the program, King spoke with The Sight Center's Executive Director Stacey Butts and Development Coordinator Tim Tegge, who expressed a desire to empower the local communities served by the Toledo-based agency. "We may have been founded in Toledo and located there, but our mission calls us to serve *all* of northwest Ohio," Butts said. Tegge recalls, "I remember asking what The Sight Center would look like if it didn't have a building, and the answer was clear - strong relationships in every county."



The initial meeting with Professor King led to other meetings in 2016 which resulted in the formation of an Allen County Low Vision Coalition in 2017. Under King's leadership, the group hosted a Low Vision Awareness Day on campus and is setting its sights on increasing employment opportunities for Lima-area residents who are blind or visually impaired. In addition to helping identify priorities and organize local activities, the coalition will also serve as a pilot test for The Sight Center, which ultimately plans to convene similar coalitions in every county it serves.

Founded in 1923 as the Toledo Society for the Blind, The Sight Center has been providing clinical and in-home services for all of northwest Ohio for decades. According to Stacey Butts, the county model will enhance the agency's ability to connect with people in their own communities by bringing the programs and services they want and need. "We know that transportation is a barrier for visually impaired non-drivers, so we feel strongly about taking The Sight Center on the road," Butts noted. "We also believe in the power of local involvement and the strengths that exist within a county community," she added.

County coalitions will be comprised of people who live with permanent vision loss as well as representatives from other organizations that share in the common cause. These may include educators, senior center representatives, veteran service organizations, eye care professionals, and others with an interest in advancing The Sight Center mission.

"At the end of the day," Ms. Butts said "the goal is to have more people getting the help they need to live the kind of lives they want. Thanks to Jacob King, we're doing that in Allen County."

For more information, contact Tim Tegge at 419-720-3937 x105 or ttegge@sightcentertoledo.org.



Stacy Bassett Returns to Sight Center in New Capacity

Former Client Takes On Assistive Technology Role



Stacy & guide Pauletta

My name is Stacy Bassett and I am the Assistive Technology and Children's Specialist at The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio. The Sight Center has been part of my life since infancy when my parents learned that my twin sister and I were totally blind. My childhood was spent attending camps and other activities for blind children, learning to use assistive technology and learning independent living skills. I am self-sufficient and confident and this is, in large part, due to the support, programs and resources offered by The Sight Center.

Prior to joining The Sight Center team, I worked for Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael California as the Training/Class Specialist and at Bowling Green State University as an Accessibility Specialist. I've long dreamed of being part of the organization that impacted me in such a positive way and I am excited to assist people who are blind and visually impaired as we work together to achieve independence.

OrCam Now Available at The Shop

Intuitive Technology Helps People "Read"

The Shop at The Sight Center is excited to announce that it is now carrying OrCam's MyEye, *the world's most advanced wearable assistive technology solution.*



The MyEye is a small camera and ear piece that fits on any eyeglass frame. It discretely converts text and other visual information to the spoken word. MyEye enables the wearer to "read" text, recognize faces, as well as identify products and paper currency. According to the manufacturer:



"We've pioneered a compact device with insightful functionality. Hear any text, appearing on any surface. Recognize the faces of people in your life. Identify supermarket products and money notes. For people who are blind, visually impaired, or have dyslexia, aphasia or other conditions. OrCam MyEye gives independence."

OrCam is the latest low-vision product available in The Shop at The Sight Center. The Shop is a retail space which showcases low vision devices, talking products and handy gadgets that maximize independence for people who are blind or visually impaired. Located in a simulated apartment, The Shop offers products which can be tested in real-life settings and demonstrated on actual household devices. The Shop is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and The Shop Online can be accessed from The Sight Center website www.sightcentertoledo.org.



To learn more about OrCam's MyEye or any other low vision product, please contact The Shop at 419-720-3937 x124 or theshop@sightcentertoledo.org

Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future

Sight Center Introduces “Wall of Hope” With Eye on 100th Anniversary

In May 2007, after nearly 90 years of service, The Sight Center moved into a new building in South Toledo thanks to visionary leaders and generous donors. During the past decade, the facility has enhanced The Sight Center's ability to live out its mission of empowering independence and enriching the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired.

In May of this year, The Sight Center celebrated the anniversary with a special open house. According to Executive Director Stacey Butts, the agency hosted the event to “celebrate our past, embrace the future, and rededicate The Sight Center to the life-changing work we do every day.”

As The Sight Center looks ahead to its 100th anniversary in 2023, the agency is reconnecting with its early roots of providing employment opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired. After recently being approved by the National Industries for the Blind (NIB), The Sight Center has taken the next steps to identify the type of work that will be done locally for NIB's corporate and government contracts. Commenting on the new partnership with NIB, Ms. Butts added, “This new venture will strengthen our ability to help our clients succeed in work and in life.”



The event also included the introduction of the new Family Room, an inviting, interactive space where guests can relax before and after appointments. The Wall of Hope (photo above) was unveiled to recognize The Sight Center's most generous supporters who have collectively made a tremendous impact on the lives of clients. All are welcome to stop in at The Sight Center, enjoy a cup of coffee and visit The Shop to see the latest low-vision products in stock.

Reserve Your 2018 Large-Print Calendar



Call 419-720-3937

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Join Us For A Day of Fun and Awareness

Canes, Brains & Automobiles Road Rally & Awareness Games Returns September 16



The Sight Center is thrilled to announce that the **2017 Canes, Brains & Automobiles Road Rally & Awareness Games** will be held the morning of **Saturday, September 16** at The Sight Center. This unique experiential fundraiser is part *Amazing Race* and part Olympics! The family-friendly event raises awareness of the White Cane Laws as well as some of the daily realities experienced by people who have limited or no sight.

THE ROAD RALLY – Teams will consist of a navigator who is blind or visually impaired and a driver who is not. Navigators will be provided with Braille, large print, or audio directions. Working together, the teams must use their brains to unravel the clues and find their way to the finish line.

THE AWARENESS GAMES – All are welcome to compete in The Awareness Games which will take place at The Sight Center that same morning. Touch, smell, taste and feel your way to gold, silver and bronze awards in this family-friendly event.

The celebration will also include a white cane experience, music, raffles and games. **Canes, Brains & Automobiles** will end with a lunchtime cookout and presentation of prizes.

- What: Canes, Brains & Automobiles Road Rally & Awareness Games
Who: Open to the public, registration required
When: Saturday, September 16 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Where: The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio, 1002 Garden Lake Parkway, Toledo
Cost: Registration for Road Rally and/or Awareness Games is \$15/person, \$30/family
How: Call 419-720-3937 or visit www.SightCenterToledo.org/events
Why: All proceeds will help The Sight Center empower independence and enrich the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired



Join the Rally. Enter the Games. Register today!

Call 419-720-3937 or visit www.sightcentertoledo.org/events to get involved!

Thank you to our sponsors!

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Dark Dinner—A Sense-sational Success!

6th Annual Gala Raises Record Amount

The room was packed as Sister Linda Pelagio (photo left) expressed gratitude for the gifts of hindsight, foresight and insight. The perfect weather thrilled WTOL



meteorologist Chris Vickers, Master of Ceremonies (also photo left). BGSU senior Joe Nauman, (photo right), whose video vignette demonstrated the power of a loving family and an optimistic spirit, challenged supporters to make sure The Sight Center is here for future students like him. The John Goerlich Distinguished Service Award was presented to Suzanne Hahn and Sandra Goerlich Alexander (see page 8). The event raised over \$35,000, including \$16,000 for the Empowerment Fund which helps clients get low-vision devices that they otherwise couldn't afford.



SAVE THE DATE! The 2018 EyEvent Dark Dinner Gala will be held on Wednesday, April 25

Pitching in to Drive Up Support

The Sight Center Open Sees Green Thanks to Generous Golfers!



Golfers and supporters gathered at Whiteford Valley Golf Course on July 12 for The Sight Center Open, an 18-hole scramble format fundraiser. A talented foursome from Habitec Security earned bragging rights as 2017 Champions. WTOL meteorologists Chris Vickers and Ryan Wichman came in 3rd place with Sight Center Director Stacey Butts, who said, "With two weathermen in the group we just knew it wouldn't rain on us!"

SAVE THE DATE! The 2018 Sight Center Open is set for Wednesday, June 27 at Whiteford Valley.

Goalball Is Back This Fall!

With generous support from the Helping Hens Fund, The Sight Center is finalizing plans for a Goalball tournament in the Toledo area this fall. Goalball is a competitive sport played 3-on-3 indoors on a gym floor by athletes who are either blind or blindfolded. The object is to roll the Goalball, a three-pound basketball-sized ball with bells inside, past the other team without them stopping it. Goalball is fun for kids and adults alike!

IIINTERESTED? Contact Dani Moran at 419-720-3937 x104 or dmoran@sightcentertoledo.org

Workshop: Using BrailleNote Touch in the Classroom

The Sight Center is hosting a hands-on workshop for educators, parents, students and support staff of students with visual impairments who want to learn about using BrailleNote Touch in the classroom. Presented by HumanWare at The Sight Center—Monday, September 18, 10:30 - 3:00 .

To register, contact HumanWare's Jim Sullivan at jim.sullivan@humanware.com or 330-283-6042

Low Vision Support Group Meets Monthly at The Sight Center

Join this newly formed monthly group designed to share common experiences, learn about resources, find solutions to your vision-related difficulties, hear from area professionals and much more. Meetings are the 2nd Friday each month from 10 AM.-12 PM. There is no cost to attend.

IIINTERESTED? Contact Jill Hunt at 419-720-3937 x114 or jhunt@sightcentertoledo.org



There's An App For That!

Stand-alone Devices Giving Way to Smartphone Apps

In the past when a person completed activities of daily living (ADL) training, he or she walked away with new skills, greater independence and many different devices to help complete those everyday tasks. With the invention and more prevalent use of portable accessible technology, such as the iPhone or iPad, the approach to completing routine

activities has changed dramatically for people who are visually impaired or blind. It's no longer uncommon for a vision rehabilitation teacher to recommend IOS or Android software applications, known as apps in place of stand-alone devices.

For example, a device like the Colorino could help a person identify the color of clothing and other objects, but so can a free app called Color ID Free. Determining the value of paper currency might have resulted in the use of a digital currency reader like the one provided at no charge by the federal government, but an app called Money Reader can perform the same function. Desktop scanners and optical character recognition (OCR) software have been common solutions for reading printed documents, but apps like KNFB Reader and Seeing AI now put that same power into smartphones and tablets. Similarly, listening to audio books, identifying objects and scanning barcode information on packaged food items can also be done with apps.

Most of the apps currently recommended to Sight Center clients by our certified staff have been specifically developed for use by people who are visually impaired or blind. Some have a download cost associated with them but the majority are free. While there is an initial investment to buy an iPhone or iPad and an ongoing cost for service and internet access, refurbished devices and public internet are more affordable strategies.

One area of daily living activities that has remained somewhat insulated from the app invasion is food preparation and cooking. While kitchen timer apps are prevalent and recipes are more accessible than ever, it seems unlikely that apps will become a substitute for double spatulas, oven mitts, talking meat thermometers, finger guards and liquid level indicators. But then again, with our growing appetite and appreciation for apps and technology, you can never really be sure!

To learn more about services at The Sight Center, including assistive technology training, contact Jill Hunt, LSW at 419-720-3937 x114 or jhunt@sightcentertoledo.org.



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Other Formats Available

If you would like to receive InSight in a different format, such as Braille, extra-large print or text only, please contact Amy Pennywitt at 419-720-3937 x106 or apennywitt@sightcentertoledo.org.

The InSight newsletter is also available in PDF format in the About Us section of our website.

Did You Know?



The number of people needing low vision services is growing due to the aging population and health-related conditions. Age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy are two of the leading causes of permanent vision loss.

Health insurance doesn't cover the majority of services needed by someone who loses all or part of their vision and many clients can't afford the devices that could help them become more independent.



The unemployment rate for people who are blind or visually impaired is dramatically higher than the national average, while traditional funding sources have been steadily reducing support for services that are not strictly employment related.

Learning how to cook, clean and perform other daily living activities as well as being able to use smart phones, apps and other assistive devices to travel safely and work independently are valuable life skills that schools are not required to provide to children who are blind or visually impaired.



Thanks to You The Sight Center turns no one away!

We rely on a variety of resources to help people of all ages work, learn, play and live independently without the sight many take for granted. Donations from people just like you play a crucial role in our ability to serve our clients. Please consider donating today.

- ▶ **MAIL:** The Sight Center of NW Ohio, 1002 Garden Lake Parkway, Toledo, OH 43614
- ▶ **ONLINE:** Click "Donate Now" on our website at www.sightcentertoledo.org
- ▶ **PHONE:** Call Tim Tegge at 419-720-3937



The Gift Card That Keeps On Giving

Consider donating your unused gift cards to The Sight Center. Gift cards can be used as raffle prizes, silent auction items, and can help The Sight Center purchase supplies.

Call Tim Tegge at 419-720-3937 x105



Our Mission

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



Get Involved!

To learn about
events, activities &
meetings, call the

Event Line

(419)

214-3459



Recognizing Distinguished Service

The John Goerlich Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes unselfish service to the blind and visually impaired community, was presented at the 6th Annual EyEvent Gala to Ms. Suzanne Hahn and Ms. Sandra Goerlich Alexander. In recognition of their longtime involvement with the agency, multiple terms on The Sight Center Board of Trustees and their respective roles in helping establish the EyEvent as the signature fundraiser, Executive Director Stacey Butts said, "We owe so much to Suzi and Sandy for all they've done to help us continue our proud legacy." (Read more about the EyEvent Gala on page 5)



*Sandy Alexander (left) and
Suzi Hahn (right) accept the
2016 Goerlich Award*

**Join the Rally.
Enter the Games.
Register today!**



**Saturday, September 16
9 AM to 1 PM
At The Sight Center
(See page 4)**