

“DAY OF CARING” A HIGHLIGHT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND CUSTOMERS

On September 27, 2012, nine community volunteers joined with Center for Vision Loss customers to participate in the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley’s annual “Day of Caring.” Eight volunteers worked for the United Way’s Community Impact Team which is responsible for managing the organization’s investments in Education, Older Adults and Basic Needs. The ninth volunteer worked for Aetna in National Accounts, Dedicated Patient Management.

This year’s project was a Shopping Day at the Lehigh Valley Mall. Each volunteer partnered with a customer who is blind or visually impaired. The volunteers first learned how to be an effective sighted guide, then met their partners at the Mall where they shopped, strolled, chatted, laughed and lunched together.

At the end of the “Day” it was difficult to tell who was happier—the volunteers or our customers! On the volunteer side we received comments like this from Kayla Lovallo, the United Way’s COMPASS Community School Outreach Coordinator/ AmeriCorps VISTA: “I thought it was an amazing experience. It is great knowing that you are making a difference in someone’s life [if] only for a short period of time. My client simply just wanted to hang out and enjoy the day with good company. It was great just spending time with him, learning about each other, and having meaningful conversations.” Aetna’s Renee Golaszewski stated: “I want to thank your organization for the opportunity to participate in the Day of Caring as it was the most personally rewarding contribution I have done in a very long time although I believe that every day should be a day of caring for our fellow man/woman.”



Our customers responded with equal enthusiasm. Joanne commented that the event was a fantastic experience for her: “I don’t usually enjoy shopping and I wondered why I decided to do this. [After] I met Gina, my shopping partner, it was clear that we would get some shopping done and have fun doing it...What helped make the day special for me was that I knew Gina had signed up to do this, and I could do whatever I wanted for those 3 hours at the mall. It felt good to know that I wasn’t imposing on someone who might not have as much time as I needed to spend shopping.” Annette responded that she had a wonderful time meeting a new friend who shared some common interests. They lunched at Ruby Tuesday where Annette reported that the wait staff made her feel very comfortable and did not see her blindness as an issue when ordering and serving her food. Karen reported that she had an enjoyable day with her helpful guide: “This was the first time I was at the mall in years...I felt like a kid and I would love to have the opportunity to do this again.”

Rita Lang, the Center for Vision Loss’s Manager of Innovative Programs, directed the shopping project. Rita noted that loss of independence is probably the most negative feeling about vision loss.

Continued on page 2

"DAY OF CARING"

Continued from page 1

"When you can no longer just jump into your car to go shopping whenever you please, you can understand that a spending a leisurely day at the Mall is so important to our customers," she said. "Our shopping project helps many of our customers avoid isolation by providing an upbeat, fun experience that restores their self-confidence and their quality of life."

The Center for Vision Loss thanks everyone who participated in this year's "Day of Caring," organized by the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley, and provided a meaningful experience for all.



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.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

I recently attended one of our Monroe activities where I met Jan, one of our customers, who told me how the Center for Vision Loss has impacted her life. Jan and her husband had relocated to the Poconos, anticipating that it would be a great place to spend their retirement years. But after making that move, who could have predicted that Jan would lose her vision to macular degeneration and that she would have to care for her husband during an illness that lasted for 10 months?

After her husband passed away, Jan found herself alone in a rural setting—isolated because she is unable to drive and also unable to read any of her paperwork and bills independently. Unfortunately each of her two sons lives several states away.

Jan stated that the support she has received from the agency has "been a lifesaver." Attending our programs gets her out with others and has helped her learn some helpful strategies about dealing more successfully with her vision problem. "I don't know what I would have done without the help I receive from the Center for Vision Loss," Jan said. "I still want to be as independent as possible."

Certainly none of us knows what the future holds. But for those who find themselves facing the unknowns of vision loss now, it is reassuring to know that the Center for Vision Loss can help them because friends like you in the community continue to support us. While I thank you for your support throughout the year, I hope that during this season where we all aspire to generosity, good will and good cheer, you will consider joining our 2012 Holiday Appeal. The size of your gift does not matter...it is more important to open your heart to help improve the lives of Jan and our many other customers.

Douglas A. Yingling
Executive Director

SPOTLIGHT ON CUSTOMER ACTIVITIES

LIONS NEEDS NIGHT SUPPORTS AGENCY

For more than 30 years, the Lions, Lionesses and Leos of District 14-K in Lehigh and Northampton Counties have raised funds to support the Center for Vision Loss at the annual Lions Needs Night. This year's dinner celebration was held at the Northampton Memorial Community Hall on October 2, 2012. Robert Phillips, Center for Vision Loss Board President, served as Master of Ceremonies. He was joined by Douglas Yingling, Executive Director. Participating District 14-K leadership included District Governor Linwood Gehris, 1st Vice District Governor Dennis Butz, 2nd Vice District Governor Fred Folland, Immediate Past District Governor Joe Chunko and Lion Lowell Hawk, a member of the Center for Vision Loss's Endowment Board.



In 2011-2012, District 14-K clubs raised more than \$56,000 to benefit the services and programs provided by our agency. Each club received a special thank you card and a "Knights of the Blind" patch to honor their commitment. Doug Yingling apprised the audience of the "state of the agency" and was joined by customers Elsie Magriso and Gloria DeVito who talked about their experiences at the Lions' Beacon Lodge. Finally, pledges and gifts made by the clubs during the event will be applied towards a fundraising goal of \$55,000 for 2012-2013. The Center for Vision Loss thanks all the clubs for their continued financial support, as well as their sponsorship of popular customer activities such as bingo games, the annual Boat Club Picnic, the Halloween Party and the Christmas Party.



PENN MUSEUM TOUCH TOUR



Imagine travelling back in time more than 5,000 years to ancient Egypt. What would you want to look at first when you arrived in that intriguing place? Well, if you have low vision, actually “looking” with your eyes would be challenging.

But “looking” with your hands would be a great solution. And that is exactly what Center for Vision Loss customers had the opportunity to do during their recent touch tours of the Lower Egyptian Gallery at Philadelphia’s University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Developed by Egyptologist Dr. Jennifer House Wegner and Trish Maunder, the Museum’s Coordinator for Special Tours, “Insights into Ancient Egypt” invites blind and visually impaired visitors to touch, feel and investigate authentic ancient objects. The museum approved six items for touch. These included the Stela of King Qa’a; Relief from Temple Wall from Bubastis; Head of Tutmosis III; Column from Ramesses II, Temple at Heracleopolis; Window, Palace of Merneptah and Sphinx. These well-chosen, large-scale artifacts are filled with images, cartouches, hieroglyphs, textures and architectural details that literally entice the visitor to explore them by touch.

When Rita Lang, the Center for Vision Loss’s Manager of Innovative Programs, learned about the Penn Museum’s special touch tours being conducted this Fall, she realized that our agency had to offer this program to our customers. “This tour provided the chance of a life time to get up close to some fantastic objects that the ancient

Egyptians regarded as commonplace,” stated Rita, who is legally blind. “Not many people, either sighted or visually impaired, would ever have the opportunity to place their hands where craftsmen’s hands toiled thousands of years ago. Travelling to Philadelphia enhanced our customers’ knowledge, independence and quality of life.”

All tour participants were allowed touch the objects without wearing gloves, but they were first asked to remove any large rings and bracelets and use oil-removing hand wipes as precautions. Of all the objects, the Sphinx, a lion with a human head, was very popular. Carved from a huge granite slab, this is the sixth largest sphinx in the world and weighs about twelve tons. Brought to Philadelphia in 1913, it is so massive that the Egyptian gallery had to be built around it. This is how Rita described her experience: “The docent placed my hand on the Sphinx and asked if I knew what part I was touching. I realized it was the huge front paw of the lion. I made my way around the Sphinx finding the remaining paws along with the massive tail. The base was chiseled and etched with such great precision. This was truly an amazing opportunity. To a blind or visually impaired person, seeing is believing what one describes. However, touching is reality.”

The Ancient Egypt touch tours are currently available by appointment only through mid-December, 2012. The Penn Museum’s innovative program was made possible with the financial support of the BNY Mellon Mid-Atlantic Charitable Trusts and the Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation. The Center for Vision Loss applauds the Penn Museum and its staff and docents for providing this unique experience. Read more participant remarks on the next page.

PENN MUSEUM TOUCH TOUR

Our Customers Share Their Thoughts...

"The Ancient Egyptian exhibit was absolutely surreal. To think we were walking among objects that dated back thousands of years was an experience hard to describe. I kept trying to transport myself back in time and walk with the civilization and get a better understanding of their culture and beliefs. Still it was not easy touching and feeling objects of such [huge] proportions." *Dorothy, Allentown Customer*

"This Touch Tour was THE most memorable museum exhibit I have ever encountered...With every touch I could feel the energy [from the artifacts] emitting into my body, energy created up to 5,000 years BEFORE! I've seen Egyptian exhibits before. The columns, with their hieroglyphs, always intrigued me as I looked from afar. I learned more in this short hour-and-a-half about the Egyptian culture than I did in school—past museum exhibits and books combined—and it is forever embedded in me. Paper may beat rock in the game, but rock told me more history than paper in this case. I can't wait to see what they plan for next year. I'm definitely going back." *Tina, Monroe Customer*

"I wanted to go on this tour because I have always been interested in different countries and their cultures. The fact that we would be allowed to touch these ancient artifacts was intriguing to me because not many museums offer this experience. The guides were informative and made it interesting. I came away feeling that we were part of the Egyptian world and not left out because we couldn't see it." *Kim, Allentown Customer*

"Feeling the exhibits gave me a better idea of their size. It was neat to feel the hieroglyphics and identify some symbols such as the falcon. The docents were so knowledgeable in their explanations and they made you feel like you wanted to learn more and more." *Brad, Monroe Customer*



ODDS AND ENDS

MONROE ACTIVITY GROUP HOSTS CUSTOMER SWAP MEET

On November 8, the Monroe Activity Group hosted a Swap Meet for all agency customers. The customers could bid on some great low vision and blindness products that had been donated by many of the participants. Often, with changes in vision, a device that was helpful in the past may no longer be useful now. Customers brought in items they wanted to donate in hope of discovering a treasure that they could really use now. The array of products was incredible ranging from a talking bill identifier that distinguishes the denominations of paper money, UNO cards with Braille and assorted magnifiers to talking watches, a floor lamp, and even some clothing. Everyone went home with a new-to-them device or item. Two lucky ladies each won a video magnification system and both claim that now they can read their mail and bills independently whereas before they were unable to read them using standard magnifiers! The project was so successful that Activity Group President Tina Tillou encouraged the group to make it an annual event.



2012-2013 RAFFLE UPDATE

2012-2013 Raffle tickets are still available at \$10 each or six for \$50. Call Stephanie Houck at **610.433.6018 x. 245** to purchase them. Winning tickets are drawn monthly through June, 2013. The Raffle supports the agency's programs and services.

List of Winners: **August, 2012:** William Barnett, John Belsham, John L. Daub, Delores Krempasky, Eleanor Lessel, Christina H. Saylor; **September, 2012:** Justin Benson, Roy Detweiler, III, Pat J. Frantz, Theresa Noraka, Ana Morganello, Audrey Racines; **October, 2012:** Heinrich Bonstedt, Gerald M. Dech, Arlene Fehr, Linda Heiney, Rose Miller, Geraldine B. Moyer; **November, 2012:** Sandy Fritzinger, Ellen Gregerinci, John S. Heckler, Gloria Kern, Lucy Whitehead, Mark Wieand; **December, 2012:** Rosemary Bobersh, Brian Glenn, Beverly Hanlon, Brad Ott, Audrey Racines, C. & D. Rothenberger. **Congratulations to all!**

AGENCY VOLUNTEERS FEATURED IN 2013 EYES CALENDAR

Each year the Susquehanna Foundation for the Blind and the Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired publishes a beautiful large print calendar. The 2013 theme, "Treasured Volunteers," features two of our volunteer staff. In February you can read about Cheryl Miller who provides receptionist and escorted transportation help in the Monroe office. In November you can meet Annette Gozzard, an Allentown customer who Brailles all of our agency's important documents. The calendar costs \$6 and can be purchased at the Allentown and Monroe offices or call **610.433.6018** to place your order. And be sure to keep this calendar in mind as a great holiday gift for someone you know who is visually impaired!



Please Join Our 2012 Holiday Appeal – **WE COUNT ON YOUR GIFT TO HELP US
CONTINUE PROVIDING THE QUALITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS YOU HAVE READ ABOUT IN THIS NEWSLETTER.**

GIVING PAGE

The Center for Vision Loss is the region's only community benefit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by vision loss. Our programs and services touch the lives of residents in Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties. Help us continue to "look beyond vision" with your tax-deductible gift today. **Enclosed please find my gift in the amount of \$_____.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST ____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

☐ Please check here if you give us permission to add your e-mail address to our electronic mailing list. We will never share your e-mail address with any other group.

This gift is a tribute ☐ In Honor Of ☐ In Memory Of

Name _____

☐ Please notify the following person regarding this tribute gift:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST ____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to: Center for Vision Loss

I prefer to pay by credit card:

Name on Card _____

Cardholder's Address _____

City _____ ST ____ Zip _____

Card Number _____

Type of Card ____ Visa ____ MasterCard

____ AmEx ____ Discover

Expiration Date ____ Month ____ Year

Security Code _____

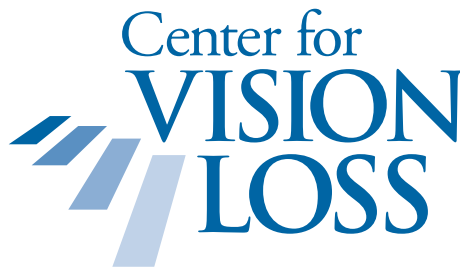
HELPING TO ASSURE OUR AGENCY'S FUTURE

Friends and supporters of the Center for Vision Loss play an important role in ensuring the agency's future and financial health. A Bequest (Gift by Will) is one of the easiest gift options to choose. Bequests may be restricted or unrestricted. Contact your tax and/or legal advisor with respect to your personal circumstances and remember that everyone needs a will regardless of the amount of their assets.

**Please detach and
send with your contribution to:
Center for Vision Loss
845 West Wyoming St.
Allentown, PA 18103**

All gifts to Center for Vision Loss are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. "The official registration and financial information of the Center for Vision Loss may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement."

**Questions?
Contact the Development Office
at 610-433-6018, x. 241.**



845 West Wyoming Street
Allentown, PA 18103

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Lehigh Valley, PA
Permit No. 221

Looking for the perfect holiday gift for someone experiencing vision loss?

Shop the *Vision Aids Store* in our Allentown office for large print items, talking clocks and watches, magnifiers, and much more.

BRING ALONG THIS AD

Offer good 11/26/12 - 1/11/13.

**Call 610.433.6018
for more information.**

10% OFF*

All Merchandise Included

**May not be used with any other coupon.*

SAVE THE DATES!

Basket Bingo & Brunch

Sunday, April 14, 2013 – Historic Hotel Bethlehem

Rescheduled 2012 Chrysalis Award Dinner

Thursday, May 9, 2013 – DeSales University

Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

Saturday, June 15, 2013 – SteelStacks in Bethlehem

Please let us know if you would rather receive this newsletter electronically by calling **610.433.6018, x 241** or go to our website at **www.centerforvisionloss.org**. Also let us know if your mailing address has changed or if you wish to be removed from our list.

VISION is published three times a year by the Center for Vision Loss for our donors, volunteers and friends in the community.

Douglas A. Yingling
Executive Director

Karen Z. Huetter
Editor

**"IT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SEE AND
HAVE NO VISION." HELEN KELLER**

SERVING LEHIGH, NORTHAMPTON AND MONROE COUNTIES



845 West Wyoming Street | Allentown, PA 18103 | P 610.433.6018

4215 Manor Drive | Stroudsburg, PA 18360 | P 570.992.7787

www.centerforvisionloss.org

