

The Visionary

What Do Our Members See?

Do you know about the eye diseases and conditions that our members live with? As you know some of our members were born blind and others became blind at some point in their life. This article is intended to enlighten you a bit on some of the more common eye diseases and conditions.

Age-related Macular degeneration (AMD) is probably one of the most common eye conditions our members have lost vision from. Macular degeneration occurs when the center of the retina (macula) is damaged,

causing the vision in the center of your eye to blur or darken. Glaucoma is an eye condition that can be caused by too much pressure from fluid in the eye. This pressure can damage the optic nerve and cause loss of sight.

People with Diabetes sometimes suffer from various eye problems. Two of the more common and more serious eye problems are Diabetic Retinopathy and Diabetic Macular Edema (DME). Diabetic retinopathy is an eye condition that affects people with diabetes who have high blood glucose, or sugar, over a pro-

longed period of time. Too much blood glucose can destroy the blood vessels in the back of the eye, preventing the retina from receiving the proper amount of nutrients it needs to maintain vision.

DME occurs when fluid leaks into the macula. The fluid causes swelling and blurs the vision. Over time, the blurring can lead to blindness. DME affects up to 10% of all patients with diabetes.

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye that can impair vision. Cataracts occur when there is a buildup of protein in the lens that makes it cloudy.

A Message From Paula

With the holidays rapidly approaching, businesses are scrambling to offer alternative and promotional gift ideas that the local mall is unlikely to offer. During this busy holiday season try something different, remember those who are less fortunate and reach out to them by volunteering in your local community.

The simple act of giv-

ing time can make a tremendous difference in the life someone in need. Make the most of this holiday season by getting involved at the Blind Center of Nevada. You will have tons of fun and make a positive impact in the lives of those who live without the gift of eyesight.

Most people think they don't have time to vol-

unteer, but you would be surprised how much difference an hour of your time can make to someone else. Current volunteer opportunities include bowling outings, shopping trips, gift basket assembly and many more. We are also offering our volunteers a great discount on gift baskets as our way to say THANK YOU for all you do!

Mission Statement

The Blind Center of Nevada assists blind and visually impaired persons of all ages in reaching their highest physical, social, intellectual, and economic potential. To achieve these objectives, there are three focus areas: personal development, social interaction, and meaningful employment

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Common Eye Myths

It's important to separate fact from fiction, especially when the topic is eyesight. Knowing how to take good care of your eyes is the first step to protecting your sight for a lifetime.

Myth: Failure to use proper glasses will hurt your eyes.

Fact: While corrective glasses or contacts are needed to improve eyesight, using your eyes with or without glasses will not damage them further.

Myth: Reading in dim light can damage your eyes.

Fact: Reading in dim light can cause eye fatigue, but it will not

hurt your eyes.

Myth: Eating carrots will improve your vision.

Fact: While it is true that carrots are high in Vitamin A, which is an essential vitamin for sight, only a small amount is necessary for good vision.

Myth: There's nothing you can do about preventing sight loss.

Fact: Regular eye exams and proper safety eyewear can save your sight.

Myth: An eye exam is only necessary if you're having problems.

Fact: Everyone should follow a

proper eye health program that includes a regular eye exam, whether or not they're having any noticeable signs of problems.

Myth: Safety goggles are more trouble than they are worth.

Fact: There are 500,000 eye injuries every year in the USA. 50% of these accidents occur at home. The leading cause of blindness in children is eye injury. 90% of injuries can be avoided by using proper eye protection.

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Reading and Writing

Literacy—the ability to read and write—is vital to a successful education, career, and quality of life in today's world. Whether in the form of curling up with a good book, jotting down a phone number, making a shopping list, or writing a report, being literate means participating effectively at home and in society.

Although learning to read and write in traditional ways may not be possible when you cannot see print on a page, there are many other paths to remaining literate. Learning to read and write in Braille can make a dramatic difference in the life of a visually impaired child or adult.

When you first touch something written in Braille, it will probably

feel like a jumble of dots. However, like any other code, Braille is based on a logical system. Once you understand it, you'll be able to read and write Braille easily. That's because Braille is not a language, it's just another way to read and write English—or any other language, such as Japanese. Learn more in the Braille section of the AFB web site, www.afb.org.

Learning to use devices like magnifiers and computers equipped with software that simulates a human voice reading the screen can also open up the world of literacy for someone with a visual impairment. Instruction in literacy skills is a critical effort.

Things to remember when you are working with the Visually Impaired.

- Don't assume you know what a person with vision impairment needs - ask them first.
- Describe your surroundings.
- Use light touch to help communicate your message.

**HAVE YOU
FILLED OUT
A NEW
APPLICATION?**

Puzzle Page

The Eye, Diseases and Conditions

Find the words on the list below that are **CAPITALIZED**. The words are always in a straight line and may read up, down, forward, backward or diagonally. Cross a word off your list once you have circled it. Some words may overlap. When you have crossed off all the words on the list, there will be some letters in the diagram that have not been circled. Read these letters from the top, left to right and they will spell out a word or phrase related to the topic. To get the answers to the puzzle email Paula. For the answer to the phase look in the newsletter. GOOD LUCK

ANTERIOR CHAMBER
AQUEOUS HUMOR
CHIASM
CHOROID
CONES
CONJUNCTIVA
CORNEA
CRYSTALLINE LENS
EYELASH
EYELID
FOVEA

IRIS
LACRIMAL GLAND
LACRIMAL SAC
LENS
LENS SACK
MACULA
OPTIC DISK
OPTIC NERVE
OPTIC TRACT
ORBITAL MUSCLES

PHOTORECEPTOR
POSTERIOR CHAMBER
PUPIL
RETINA
RODS
SCLERA
TEAR FILM
UVEA
VITREOUS HUMOR
ZONULES

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Common Eye Myths

Myth: There is no need to have your vision checked before you turn 40.

Fact: There are treatable eye diseases; glaucoma is one of them, which can show up before you turn 40.

Myth: Wearing poorly fit glasses damages your eyes.

Fact: The right eyeglass prescription is required for good vision. Poor fitting glasses do not damage your eyes.

Myth: Poorly fit contacts do not harm your eyes.

Fact: Poorly fit contact lenses can damage your cornea. If you use contact lenses, have them checked regularly.

Myth: Eating carrots will improve

your vision.

Fact: Carrots are high in Vitamin A, which is important for a balanced diet. Eating carrots or other foods high in Vitamin A will not improve your vision. Taking large amounts of Vitamin A can be very harmful. People that do not eat a balanced diet can develop vision problems along with other problems as they age.

Myth: Sitting close to the television will harm your eyes.

Fact: There is no evidence that sitting close to the television will damage your eyes. If this were true, office workers that sit 8 hours a day 17 inches from their computer screens, would all be blind. Sit wherever you are most comfortable when watching TV.

Myth: Doctors can transplant eyes.

Fact: Doctors can transplant the cornea, but not the eye its self. The retina and optic nerve are part of the brain. When doctors figure out how to transplant the brain, they will be able to transplant the eye.

(continued next newsletter)

Volunteer Vision

To be a fundamental part in advancing the vision, mission and value of the Blind Center of Nevada

What Do Our Members See?

(continued from page 1)

This prevents light from passing through a normally clear lens, causing some loss of vision. No one knows what causes the buildup of protein responsible for clouding the lens. The cataract is a lens that has become clouded. More than half of all Americans age 65 and older have cataracts in their eyes.

Retinal detachment is a very serious condition that occurs when the retina pulls away from its supporting tissues.

Since the retina can't work properly under these conditions, permanent vision loss may occur if a detachment is not repaired within 24 to 72 hours

These are just a few examples of the many eye diseases and conditions. There are many more that are not mentioned here. Knowing about the disease can help us understand what the problem is, but nothing can help us truly understand what they see.

On the internet there is a website that is designed to help better understand the possible progression of some of the more common eye diseases and conditions.

The Vision Simulator approximates what sufferers of various eye conditions might see at the different stages of each condition. Log onto <http://www.visionsimulator.com/>, and begin to understand.

HELP Needed ASAP In The Following Areas

What would we do without you, our volunteers? Every volunteer position at the Blind Center is an important link in our chain of support. However, sometimes it becomes clear that there are some positions that we need filled as soon as possible in order to help the center run. Right now we have three positions we need immediate help with.

The first is for a handy dandy Maintenance and Repair person. Upkeep of the center becomes difficult when there is no one to help. We are looking for an energetic, handy individual to oversee in the upkeep and maintenance of

the Blind Center building and grounds. This position requires a couple of days per week, the hours are flexible.

Our Ceramics Instructor will be having some surgery within the next couple of weeks. We are looking for teachers and assistants to run, teach and perform upkeep of our ceramics department. Tasks include helping to glaze projects, pouring of molds, etc. Class is held on Wednesdays from 9 am to 11 am, other hours and days are flexible.

Do you enjoy the computer? We are seeking mentors to teach and

guide members in basic computer programs, including word-processing, Internet usage as well as keyboard class. Low vision software will be used. All mentors will receive on-going training. This position requires a minimum of a couple of hours once a week, the days and hours are flexible.

If you are interested in any of these position or know someone who might be, please let us know A.S.A.P. As always thank you for all you do.

Have you completed your
timesheet and monthly
Progress Notes?

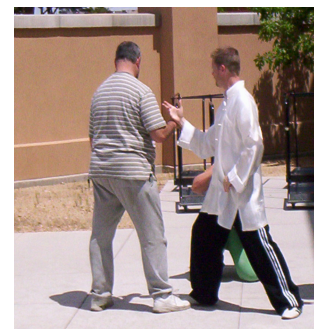
Sharpen Your Existing Skills Or Learn New Ones

The Hadley School for the Blind whose mission is to promote independent living through life-long, distance education programs for blind people and there family.

Hadley is the single largest worldwide educator of blind and visually impaired individuals. They offer more than 90 courses across four programs. The programs area are Adult Continuing Education Program, High School Program, Family Education Program and Professional Education Program. As a volunteer of The Blind Center you are con-

sidered a professional, therefore you are eligible to take course. Hadley rules state you can only take one course at a time.

The Professional Education Program (PE) features courses for professionals, volunteers and service providers who work with blind people. Designed to help students sharpen existing skills or acquire new ones, course topics include independent living, low-vision and Braille. For a complete list of course available to you, or to apply, please visit www.hadley-school.org, hit the courses link on the left and then the link for Professional Education Program.



Rob, one of our Tai Chi Instructor shows Jack some moves

*Happy Holidays to all
and to all a
Happy New
Year!*



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*"Alone We Can Do So Little;
Together We Can Do So Much"*

~ Helen Keller

We're on the web
www.blindcenter.org

Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Let us know.

When You Meet A Visually Impaired Person

The person you meet might have been vision impaired for many years and feel quite confident in the setting they are in.

Others might have recently experienced vision loss and may still be learning to move about safely and with confidence. Even if the person uses a cane or has a guide dog, they might still appreciate your help.

Many people make the mistake of simply grabbing a vision impaired person's arm and taking them across a road, through a doorway or into a car. This is not neces-

sary and might upset or offend the person.

If the person has asked for your help to get somewhere, brush your hand against theirs, and they will take hold of your arm. Walk slightly ahead of the person and alert them to hazards, such as uneven ground and steps.

Depending on the situation, many people with vision loss appreciate a description of their surroundings. If you are outside, describe what you see around you; if you are inside, describe the building, its size and furnishings and so on.



Ronnie and volunteer Odile at last years holiday party

As you can see, interacting with someone who is visually impaired is little or no different then meeting someone with sight.