

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

THE SEER

Winter 2010

Forward-thinking information, news and events for today's visually impaired.

PAB Member Agency Providing Services to Those Who Serve

Local Veterans with Visual Impairments Benefit from Computer Training at the Center

For nearly two decades, the Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) has been a leader in providing computer training to individuals with blindness and visual impairment. The Computer Access Technology (CAT) Program at CBVI offers a variety of computer training options that instruct clients to use adaptive software specially designed for those with vision loss. Both screen magnification and voice synthesized options provide accessibility to virtually every function of our high-tech 21st century. Clients can receive training at CBVI or in their home. Many of our CAT clients come to us by referral or as private fee-for-service consumers. Participants are all ages, come from all backgrounds, and have a variety of eye conditions.

"I thought computers were just for young people — not me, but I found out that I'm not too old to learn."

~ Paul Rossi, age 93

Perhaps the aspect of the CAT program of which CBVI is most proud, however, is our affiliation with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the role we play in providing computer training to local visually impaired veterans. G.W. Stilwell, Coordinator of the Visual Impairment Services Team at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, calls the VA's affiliation with CBVI an "all-around win-win." Stilwell explains that the main goal for these vets is "a quality of life that is equal to their peers." This includes using the computer as a new way of communicating. "Many enjoy keeping up with grandchildren through e-mail," adds Stilwell.

One such client is 93 year-old Paul Rossi. A WWII Navy vet, he served on the US Jeep Carrier, Croatan. Now totally blind, he began to lose vision eight years ago due to a combination of macular degeneration and glaucoma. Paul sings the praises of the CAT program and compliments his in-home instructor, Kim Graham. "She has a knack for making you want to learn," he states. "I thought computers were for young people - not me, but I found out that I'm not too old to learn." Paul's computer is equipped with two voice synthesized programs, JAWS and Guide for Windows where all text appearing on a monitor is read to the user. Paul chats to friends in Illinois, Connecticut and New York; he also emails his daughter and grandson. "The CAT program opened up the world for me," concludes Rossi.

Joe Crespo was only 18 years old when he was injured in battle in Vietnam. He sustained injuries that left him in a coma for three months. The 60 year-old describes his sight as if he were

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INSIDE:

**How You Can
Make a Difference**

ANNUAL APPEAL
TWO THOUSAND TEN





Saturday, May 14, 2011
5K Walk & One-Mile Fun Walk
City Island, Harrisburg

The Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community brings together local nonprofit organizations that deliver vital health and human services programs in our community. The Pennsylvania Association for the Blind (PAB) will be one of those participating organizations for the 6th year in a row.

There is no registration fee for the walk, although we are encouraging all PAB Walkers to help raise funds for those who are blind or visually impaired. Highmark Blue Shield underwrites the cost of the entire walk, so 100% of the money raised is donated directly to benefit those in need.

If you donate \$25 or more for PAB you will receive a Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community T-Shirt. In addition, there will be food, beverages, music, activities and prize drawings at the Walk.

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to support the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind while also enjoying a beautiful day outside!

Mark your calendars, and look for our Online Walk Registration Form, and Online Donation Page in the next coming months! For more information please contact Katie Schock at 717-766-2020 or Katie.schock@pabind.org

***STEP** Student Transition to Employment or Education Preparation*

May 13th – 15th, 2011 ~ Beacon Lodge, Mount Union PA

This program is offered to students ages 12 through 21, who are visually impaired and wish to go on to higher education or seek competitive employment. STEP prepares students and their parents for the future by teaching them new skills and providing valuable information. The program includes panel discussions, vendor and technology demonstrations, recreational activities, and more! Students must be residents of PA.

For more information or for an application contact Bonnie Frey at 717-766-2020 or e-mail at bonnie.frey@pabind.org Space is limited so don't wait!

We are looking for volunteers to help with program activities, participate on panel discussions or provide their professional skills in the areas of employment or higher education.



Sponsor a family today!

Through your sponsorship you will make a difference in a student's life, their parent's life, and the community. Your gift will allow one student and his or her parents or guardian to attend the STEP Program and will better prepare the family for a successful future.

For more information on how you can Sponsor a Family please call Katie Schock at 717-766-2020 or Katie.schock@pabind.org.

facebook

"LIKE" Pennsylvania Association for the Blind on Facebook. Stay up-to-date with upcoming events and so much more.

UPCOMING EVENTS



ANNUAL APPEAL

TWO THOUSAND TEN

Dear Friends,

What an exciting year this has been for the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind (PAB). We have many successes and achievements we are proud to share, the most significant was celebrating our 100th year helping those who are blind and visually impaired.

I reflect upon the amazing changes that have taken place over the last century. PAB has weathered the Depression, two world wars, numerous changes in the economic climate, and societal expressions. But throughout it all, we have maintained a constant course in pursuit of our founding mission, and stayed fluid, changing our approach to respond to the contemporary needs of those who are blind.

PAB has grown and evolved to be an organization with 28 agencies throughout Pennsylvania, all committed to the latest technology, education, literacy, and independence for people who are blind. Access technology has helped blind people pursue professional and personal opportunities that didn't exist when I started in this field over 30 years ago. Many PAB member agencies have expanded their array of services to include low vision services, transition services for blind students, support groups, orientation and mobility, and vision rehabilitation.

We have been able to do all of this because of the generosity of our donors. Because of you. It is through your support that PAB and our member agencies continue to provide valuable services to those individuals who are blind or visually impaired and will continue to change many lives for another 100 years.

We encourage you to learn how your tax-deductable donations are being used to change lives and provide hope for the future. Turn the page to read more and discover how you can make a difference.

With deepest gratitude,

Elaine Welch

Elaine Welch

President and CEO

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind

Where Does the Money Go?

So, you know that the work PAB does is important and vital to the blind and visually impaired community. You understand that PAB helps blind people live independent, productive lives. Okay...but what exactly does that mean and where does the money go?

Through individual and corporate donations, plus grants from private and government sources, PAB and its Member Agencies offer individual training, workshops and seminars, transportation assistance, rehabilitation, employment opportunities, summer instructional programs for children, vision screenings, support groups, counseling and so much more. Our focus is to help those who need it most and educate the community.

STEP PROGRAM

Our Student Transition to Employment (STEP) Program prepares students and their parents for the future by teaching them new skills to help them transition into higher education or seek competitive employment.

TRAINING AND BRAILLE LITERACY AWARENESS

PAB conducts specific training and Braille literacy awareness from our corporate office. Funds received for this program provide the equipment and resources necessary to offer effective training sessions.

BROADBAND OUTREACH PROGRAM

Through our Broadband Outreach Program, we are able to create awareness on broadband technology and access technology; and help those who are visually impaired to stay independent and connected in their homes, in a society where telecommunications are becoming more mainstream.

BLINDNESS AWARENESS PROGRAMS

PAB is unrelenting in our mission to educate the community and raise awareness on visual impairments and blindness. Through our programs, we can do just that.

EYE CARE PROFESSIONALS EDUCATION

PAB recognizes that the eye care profession is critical in the diagnosis, treatment, and after care for the blind and visually impaired community. It's important that this group of medical professionals are aware of the resources and services offered by PAB and its Member Agencies.



How Can You Help?

We need your financial support to continue assisting the people who are blind or visually impaired live more independently. Your tax-deductable donation will make a positive difference in the lives of others. Those contributions enable us to offer effective programs and services to those who need them most. Through your gift, we can develop new skills training techniques and provide a broad range of services to individuals across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



ANNUAL APPEAL
TWO THOUSAND TEN



Here are two ways that you can contribute:



MAIL IN YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Fill out the form below and return, along with your donation, in the supplied envelope.



GIVE ONLINE

Go online to our website at www.pablind.org/donate/give-money.asp

There you will have two choices for safe, secure online giving. Contribute a one-time gift or set-up a reoccurring donation. With either option, you are making a huge impact in helping blind people gain self-confidence, self-determination, and have a brighter hope for the future.

Thank you for your support!



YES! I will help the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind continue its 100 year mission of care!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



YES! I will help the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind continue its 100 year mission of caring for blind and visually impaired Pennsylvanians!

Donation Amount: _____

Please make checks payable to Pennsylvania Association for the Blind.

For credit card gifts:



Visa



Mastercard



Discover



American Express

Name on Card _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

3 Digit Security Code (on back of card) _____



Please send me a FREE subscription to PAB's newsletter to keep me updated on great things that PAB is doing to help people in need.



Please include me on your email list for PAB updates and events.

Your email address: _____

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind is a 501(c)3 registered charitable organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

PAB Completes New User-Friendly Website

www.pabind.org

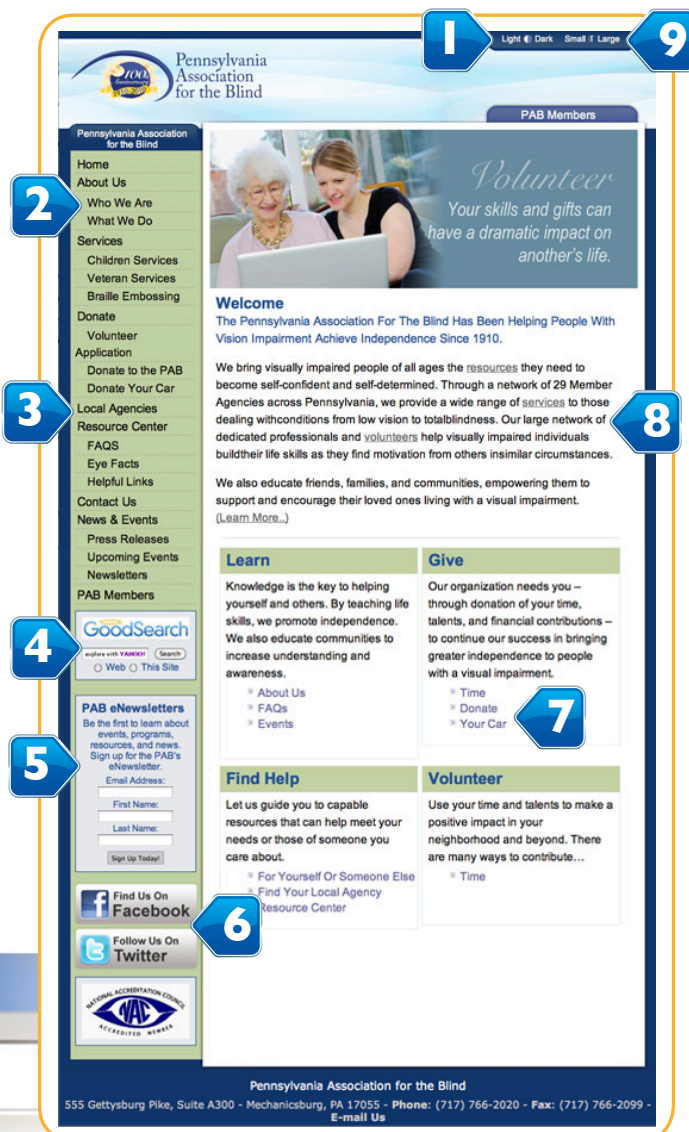
Have you visited www.pabind.org lately?

If so, you'll see one of our proud achievements for 2010: PAB's completely redesigned website. Not only is it a valuable source of information, it links together Pennsylvania's blind and visually impaired community and provides resources, news, and services for families of the wonderful people we serve.

Here are some of the highlights of our new website:

1. **Light/Dark Contrast:** Reverse the type for easy readability.
2. **Improved Navigation:** Makes our new website easy to use.
3. **Agency Finder:** Use to learn about services in your area.
4. **GoodSearch:** PAB gets a donation every time you use our site to search the web.
5. **Newsletter Sign-up:** Convenient sign-up for our newsletter.
6. **Social Media Links:** Stay up-to-date on Facebook and Twitter.
7. **Online Donation System:** Individuals can make secure donations or find volunteer opportunities in the comfort of their home.
8. **Easy to Read Type:** Arial, 16 point, typeface was chosen for its readability.
9. **Adjustable Text Size:** Increases the text size on each page.

Have suggestions for our website? We'd love to hear from you at info@pabind.org



Indiana County Blind Association

To Continue Services Despite Many Challenges

Several months ago, the Indiana County Blind Association (ICBA), a member of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind (PAB), suffered a devastating fire which destroyed their headquarters. This fine organization has provided services to the residents of Indiana County since its incorporation in 1952.

Marianne McGee, the Executive Director, has been volunteering her time and working with local Lions Clubs to continue much needed preschool vision screenings and casework services. The board of directors of ICBA has agreed to have PAB create a local office in Indiana County so that services can continue long-term.

Marianne McGee will continue to direct services in Indiana County. To contact Marianne, please see her new contact information below:

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind
Indiana County Office
P. O. Box 209
Home, Pennsylvania 15747
Ph: (724) 397-4054 email: mmcgeeindiana@pabind.org

If you are a resident of Indiana County and would like to make a donation to support services in your local area, please send your donation to:

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind
555 Gettysburg Pike, Suite A300
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Please designate that you would like for your donation to be used for services in Indiana County.

HOW WE MAKE IT SIMPLE

Fill out the PA Broadband Survey and help PAB achieve independence for the blind and visually impaired community.

Participating only takes less than five minutes and is easy:



ONLINE

- Go to www.pablind.org/survey
- Complete the online survey
- Your answers are confidential



BY MAIL

- Complete the survey card to the right
- Mail using the enclosed envelope
- Your answers are confidential

Thank you for supporting the PAB!

PA Broadband Initiative Survey

What is your address?

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____

What is your age?

- ☐ 5–18 ☐ 19–25 ☐ 26–40
☐ 41–65 ☐ 66+

Does your vision impair your ability to read a computer screen?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what type of access technology do you need?

- ☐ Screen Magnifier
☐ Synthetic Speech Program

What type of internet service do you have?

- ☐ Cable
☐ DSL
☐ Satellite
☐ Wireless
☐ Do not have it

Is broadband available?
(check all that apply)

- ☐ Not Available
☐ Cable Modem
☐ DSL
☐ Wireless
☐ Satellite

If you do not have broadband, why?

- ☐ Don't want it
☐ Can't afford it
☐ It's not available
☐ Don't know about it

How do you find out about an emergency in your local community?

- ☐ TV ☐ Radio
☐ Phone Chain
☐ Computer
☐ Other _____

How much of your current work duties could be handled from home (tele-work) if you had the right kind of equipment and connectivity?

- ☐ None ☐ Some ☐ Half
☐ Most ☐ All

If it were practical, possible, and approved by your employer, how often would you work from home?

- ☐ Never
☐ Emergencies (weather/illness)
☐ Occasionally
☐ Often
☐ Always

Would others in your household use broadband?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How would they use it?

- ☐ Tele-Work
☐ Home Based Business
☐ Education
☐ Entertainment
☐ Other _____

Outreach Program

To Continue Services Despite Many Challenges

The Pennsylvania Association for the Blind receives \$151,000 to conduct Broadband Outreach Programs ~ *What does this mean for the Blind and Visually Impaired Community?*

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, approximately 90,000 Pennsylvanians are blind or visually impaired. The Pennsylvania Association for the Blind (PAB) has identified the need for a more efficient means to communicate with, and provide support to, visually impaired people across the Commonwealth.

Telecommunications has great potential to enhance both the quality of life of the residents of Pennsylvania and the vitality of its businesses. Many people who are blind or visually impaired often cannot

access this resource either because of age, rural location or income level.

More importantly, emergency preparedness information is vital before and during a time of crisis and it is imperative that those individuals who are blind or visually impaired receive real-time communication in the event of an emergency.

In partnership with SEDA-Council of Governments (a public development organization), PAB has created a survey to directly measure who has, or would like to, utilize broadband technology. This survey will help us to accurately determine locations of the highest level of need in Pennsylvania. In addition, PAB has partnered with the American Red Cross of the Susquehanna Valley to conduct 15 Outreach Programs to

educate and survey the community on current broadband connectivity and appropriate emergency preparedness management.

By completing the survey, you will provide PAB with the information to help overcome the challenges of connectivity that many people are facing in a time where telecommunications is becoming essential for living an independent life. PAB's goal is to provide the blind and visually impaired community with the resources they need to live independently in their homes and to live productive lives.

Send in your survey today, or visit pablind.org to complete the survey online or to see how you can participate in a Broadband Outreach Program in your local community.

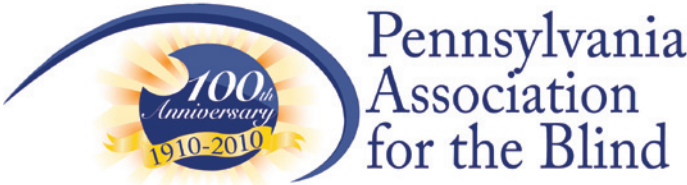


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“looking through the eye of a needle.” Like Paul, Joe enthusiastically reports, “Kim really knows her stuff!” Because of his injuries, Joe uses Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software. Joe uses his voice to activate most computer-based functions in a hands-free manner. Joe loves to cook and enjoys using the computer to search for recipes. “I just ask for a recipe for chicken parm and it gives it to me! My computer is my new best friend,” he adds with a chuckle in his voice.

In 2005, Jorge Rodreigez was serving in Iraq when his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb causing brain injury which affected Jorge’s eyesight. When Instructional Aide, John Calhoun, arrived at Jorge’s home, Jorge had no idea that John was blind. “When I saw what John could do, I was motivated to learn to use computers too,” explains Rodreigez. Jorge also uses Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software to perform online household tasks. Jorge accesses the Internet and keeps in touch with old Army buddies via e-mail.

CBVI’s CAT program provides approximately 300 hours of service annually to veterans. As G.W. Stilwell states, “These vets paid their dues long ago to be able to receive these services and are entitled to what they’ve earned.” CBVI is glad to be of help.



With 100 years of experience in helping visually impaired people develop life skills and achieve independence, we bring innovative programs and resources to communities across Pennsylvania. Our services span a broad spectrum to meet the varied needs of those with a visual impairment. We offer individual training, workshops and seminars, transportation assistance, rehabilitation, employment opportunities, summer instructional programs for children, vision screenings, support groups, counseling, and more. We work closely with our 28 member agencies to help those we serve gain self-confidence and self-determination.



To find out what services are available in your area
visit: <http://www.pabind.org>



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