

Dear Friends,

Since starting my new position at FCAB, I've learned a great deal about the services offered through the association. In my opinion, this is knowledge worth sharing. As a result, this year's newsletters will highlight the services and/or programs offered at the FCAB.

We'll be starting with our low vision services. What is low vision and how might it affect each and every one of us? The answers to these questions and other commonly asked questions about low vision are addressed in this newsletter. The FCAB addresses the needs of those with low vision by demonstrating various low vision aids, such as magnifying and telescopic lenses, large print materials, talking watches and telephones, and CCTVs. A low vision clinic is conducted on a regular basis for eligible clients. The clinic allows the client to meet with a low vision specialist and talk personally about what assistive aids might help them to move through life's activities more easily. Shirley Workman coordinates the low vision services.

Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find a broadband outreach survey which is being conducted through the state of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the survey is to find out where additional access technology is needed to reach the visually impaired throughout the state. As we all know, technology has become key in keeping us all informed of an emergency. Anyone can complete this survey, you do not have to be visually impaired. If you'd like, call the association and we will complete it for you over the telephone. Just a little bit of your time and effort will help in moving this cause forward.

You will notice that your very generous honorariums and memorials are listed in our newsletter this month. This will be a new feature in the newsletter, while continuing to have them printed in your local newspaper.

I want to extend a special thank you to the Lions Clubs that hosted holiday dinners for the FCAB clients and staff. In November, the Grindstone Lions Club held their annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Torchlight Inn. In early December, the Connellsville Lions Club hosted a Christmas Dinner at Bud Murphy's. Bobby Reed and vocalist Alice Richards entertained the group with classic holiday music and some of Bobby's original works. A good time was had by all at both dinners!

As we look ahead to spring and new beginnings, not only do I look forward to the continuance of current services, I'm also excited to start some new ventures! So, I hope that you will take some time to read the newsletter and keep up to date on the happenings. If you have suggestions for the newsletter, programming and/or services, or any other opportunities for our blind and visually impaired community, please feel free to call me or stop into the office.

Donna Grote, Executive Director

Fayette County Association for the Blind
48 Bierer Lane Uniontown Pa 15401

Hours : 8:30 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

Monday thru Friday

Phone: 724-437-2791 | Fax: 724-439-3085

Email address: fayblind@onecommail.com

Support Group

Do you ever feel like exchanging feelings and talking about the practical experiences of being blind? Our support group will be designed to give you the opportunity to do just that. Beginning in April, the FCAB will begin holding a regular support group where blind clients can share ideas, exchange feelings, and learn from others who face the same challenges, joys, and experiences. Each session will have a specific focus and may include a speaker.

At this first session, you will also have the opportunity to give your thoughts on the support group. Think of it as "your support group". How would you like to see it structured? What types of speakers and activities would you like to see? We hope to make the support group a regular event at FCAB, but we can only do this with your participation and input. Please feel free to call Donna Grote with any questions or for help arranging transportation.

DATE: Thursday, April 14, 2011

TIME: 1:30 P.m.—3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Fayette County Association for the Blind

SPEAKER: Donna Lambie, Social Worker with Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services

RSVP by calling 724-437-2791

Light refreshments will be served.

READ ON FOR A NEW VERSION OF KINDLE FOR BLIND AND LOW VISION PC USERS.

Amazon.com is releasing a new version of Kindle for PC that adds accessibility features designed for blind and low-vision customers.

Kindle for PC with Accessibility Plugin is a free, downloadable application for your Windows PC. It provides the following accessibility features:

- text-to-speech reading with adjustable voice settings, voice-guided menu navigation, large font sizes, high contrast reading mode, keyboard navigation, and accessible shortcuts.

With this software, for the first time ever, the entire collection of English language books in the Kindle Store can be read aloud. With over 750,000 English language titles, Amazon offers the largest selection of accessible ebooks. In order to use the text-to-speech feature, an external screen reader program must be installed and running on the Windows PC.

The free download is available at:

<http://www.amazon.com/kindle/accessibility>

FACTS ABOUT LOW VISION

What is Low Vision?

Low vision means that even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery, people find everyday tasks difficult to do. Reading the mail, shopping, cooking, seeing the TV, and writing can all be challenging to the person experiencing low vision. But, many people are learning that they can take charge of their low vision concerns by using devices and services that help them continue to be independent.

Is losing vision just a part of going older?

Not necessarily. Most people develop low vision because of eye diseases and health conditions, such as Macular Degeneration, cataract, glaucoma and diabetes. While vision that's lost usually cannot be restored, many people can make the most of the vision they have.

Your eye care professional is the best person to tell you if vision loss is due to normal changes in aging or a particular health condition.

How do I know if I have low vision?

You should have regular dilated eye exams to determine your eye health, but there are many signs that can signal vision loss. For example, even with your regular glasses, do you have difficulty:

- Recognizing faces of friends and relatives?
- Doing things that require you to see well up close, like reading, cooking, sewing, or fixing things around the house?
- Picking out and matching the color of your clothes?
- Doing things at work or home because lights seem dimmer than they used to?
- Reading street and bus signs or the names of stores?

What can I do to take charge of my low vision?

Talk with your eye care professional and get more information about devices and services that may help you. Visual devices such as magnifying lenses for close-up viewing or telescopic lenses for seeing in the distance, and training on how to use them, may be available to you.

If your eye care professional says, "Nothing more can be done for your vision," ask about vision rehabilitation. These programs offer a wide range of services, such as low vision evaluations and special training to use visual and adaptive devices. They also offer guidance for modifying your home as well as group support from others with low vision.

Can the Fayette County Blind Association help me with my low vision needs?

Yes, the staff at FCAB will do everything possible to assist you with your low vision needs. We have various devices and services available on site. If necessary, we can also link you to other resourcesall leading you toward the path of independence. For more information on your low vision needs, call us at 724-437-2791 or contact the National Eye Institute (www.nei.nih.gov)

In Memory of Byronetta McGaughey

Byronetta McGaughey, former Executive Director of the Fayette County Association for the Blind, passed away this past November. Byronetta served as the Executive Director from November 1960 through July 1977. During her tenure, the Prevention of Blindness Program was started. This program is still in operation today and serves to provide vision screening to over 1000 children each year.

It was also during Byronetta's tenure that a highly successful local fund-raising campaign produced a new building for the blind association, which today remains home.



A LIFE OF MUSIC



"From an early age, I knew I wanted to pursue music" quoted **Bobby Reed** in a recent feature story written by the Herald Standard newspaper. Bobby, who is blind and who has never taken a music lesson in his life, taught himself how to make music. Bobby has been a friend of the blind association for many years and we want to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his "life of music".

For those of you who are not familiar with Bobby, his music is a composite of jazz, rhythm and blues, and big band. Many of his original songs are a direct reflection of his roots, growing up in Fayette County. His instrument of choice is the Hammond organ and believe me...he plays it well!

Bobby's most recent CD is available at the FCAB or by contacting Bobby directly at 724-438-0124. The cost is \$10.00. If you'd prefer to hear him live, you can listen to Bobby and his quartet at the Uniontown Holiday Inn every Thursday evening.



**Spring
Cleaning
Broom
Sale!**

All of our brooms are created by workers at Blind & Vision Rehab Service of Pittsburgh.

Proceeds from this sale will benefit the Fayette County Association for the Blind.

- ◆ Lioness Broom (medium house broom) \$13.00
- ◆ Corn & Cane Broom (heavy duty outdoor broom) \$13.00
- ◆ Whisk Broom \$7.00
- ◆ Toy (lobby) Broom \$8.00 (10-12 inch handle, Kids LOVE them!)



TO PLACE YOUR ORDER:

Phone: 724-437-2791

BROADBAND OUTREACH SURVEY

Dear Friend,

We are requesting your help in addressing the need for a more efficient means of communication and support to all Pennsylvanians with a visual impairment, especially those located in rural areas, such as Fayette County. **By completing this quick outreach survey, you will help determine where the need for additional technology access exists throughout Pennsylvania. You do not need to be visually impaired to complete the survey.**

We all know that satisfactory quality of life, including a minimum level of safety and independence, is enabled by technology and real-time communication. Many blind and visually impaired individuals, because of income level, rural location or age, do not have access to broadband and/or a computer connection. In order to connect these individuals and keep them independent in their homes, the state of Pennsylvania, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, is conducting this survey.

In addition, through a partnership with local chapters of the American Red Cross, several Outreach Programs will be held throughout the state to educate and survey blind individuals, family and friends for two purposes: to obtain adequate information of current broadband connectivity, and educate the community of appropriate emergency preparedness management. Further information on these outreach programs will be available at a later date.

Please help us by completing the brief survey on the back of this sheet. Upon completion, return the survey to your local blind agency at:

Fayette County Association for the Blind
48 Bierer Lane
Uniontown, PA 15401

You may also complete the survey on-line at www.pablind.org

Thank you for your support!

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

Do you currently subscribe to or have?

Cable DSL Satellite Wireless Do not have Broadband

Is broadband available?

Not Available Cable Modem DSL Wireless Satellite

If you do not have broadband, is it because?

Do not want it Cannot afford it Cannot get it Do not 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 _____

How did you hear about this survey?

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind American Red Cross Local Blind Agency Other _____



pennsylvania broadband initiative



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Honorariums/Memorials



A great way to honor that special someone in your life is through a donation to the Fayette County Association for the Blind. A donation to the FCAB is also a thoughtful way to send your condolences to the family of someone who has passed away. These contributions are not only a wonderful way to pay tribute to someone special to you, but are also a way to help continue the work of the blind association.

It is our honor to acknowledge those gifts received by the FCAB from January 1st, 2011 through February 18, 2011.

Robin Colatch Neiderstros in honor of Samuel M. Colatch, Elizabeth Egnot in honor of Ray Egnot, Douglas Kurnava in honor of Audrey Kurnava, Karen Stanish in memory of Marge Demeter, Andrew Demeter in memory of Marge Demeter, Irene and Stan Tabaj in honor of parents Stanley and Mildred Tabaj and Jack and Margaret Sherrin, Pam Herman in honor of Jim and Regina Karwatsky, Anthony and Phyllis Podlogar in honor of Tim Podlogar, Don Albani in honor of parents Mr. and Mrs. Ray Albani, Tracey Porter in memory of Josephine Lancaster, Leonore Packrone in honor of Guy Packrone Junior and Senior, Agnes Monteith in honor of Thomas Monteith, Wilma Rodeheaver in honor of Jane Yonkey, Wilma Rodeheaver in honor of Jane Yonkey, Jennie Stanec in honor of Dave Stanec, in memory of Roy W. Anderson given by his Family, Martha Piszczor in honor of Bernard Piszczor, Mary Lou Bowser in honor of Paul and Mary Black, in memory of John B. Thompson given by his Family, Frances Field in honor of Anna Greya, Elsie Hatfield in honor of Don C. Hatfield, Vicki Morgan in memory of James Phelan, Juanita DelGrosso in honor of Viola Trump, Barbara Ann Cavalcante in honor of Mike and Barbara L. Cavalcante, M. Meyokovich in honor of Joe Revak, Bernice Rosiek in honor of The Rosiek Family, Kenny, Marie and Becky Martin in honor of Frank Martin, Bernice Rosiek in honor of The Rosiek Family, Donna Moyer in honor of Mother and Father, Jacquelyn Minor in honor of Darell Minor, Elizabeth Danko in honor of Deceased Loved Ones, Arnold and Agnes Tarpley in honor of The Tarpley Lewis Family, Alex Duda in honor of his Wife, Connie and Carl Bryner in honor of Bernardine Hagan, Sara B. Garee in honor of Delmer H. Garee, Mrs. Julia Kaydo in honor of husband Michael Kaydo, Bob and Sue Merryman in honor of Andrew Sloan.



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Thank you to the Lions Clubs!



The Lions Clubs throughout Fayette County have been valued partners with the Blind Association for many years.

They serve on our board of directors, collect eye glasses, contribute their time and dollars, sponsor events for our customers and touch the lives of clients in so many ways. This long and important relationship is greatly appreciated by everyone at the Blind Association. Thank You!

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your club members. Please contact Donna Grote to arrange a speaker for one of your meetings.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT !