



A little vision
goes a long way.

2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends,

Our strategic plan for 2015-2016 addresses the prediction that by 2030 the rates of vision loss will double along with the country's aging population. This information has a direct impact on Vision Forward and the services we provide. As a result, to better accommodate the needs of our current clients as well as future clients, this year we developed the following:



- **Technology and Education Center (TEC)** that offers access to and training on the latest advancements in technology designed for people with vision loss.
- **Youth Sports Camp** that provides opportunities for kids to experience recreational and sporting activities with adaptations, enabling them to compete individually and as part of a team.
- **Vision Connections Conference** in collaboration with the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute that addresses the medical aspects of vision loss as well as current research and technology.

Our Board of Directors is working diligently to raise Vision Forward's profile in the community and position the organization for the future. Additionally, our staff of highly trained vision loss experts is working with the medical and educational communities to strengthen and expand our programs to ensure they meet the needs of all age groups. Their collective work has made this a transformative year at Vision Forward!

Our accomplishments would not be possible without you, our donors and supporters.

As we continue to prepare for the future, your feedback, support, and belief in our work is vital. If you are looking for additional ways to further our mission, please: refer us to someone with vision loss, volunteer, educate others about our services, like us on Facebook, or host a third party fundraising event. If you have other ideas we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for all you do to support individuals in our community who are blind or visually impaired. You truly are making a difference.

Sincerely,

Mike Aprahamian
Board President

Terri Davis
Executive Director

By 2030 the rates of vision loss will double along with the country's aging population.

**American Foundation
of the Blind**

OUR MISSION

Empower, educate, and enhance the lives of individuals impacted by vision loss through all of life's transitions.

Through life's transitions...

Vision loss is something that alters the course of your life. Whether you are a parent who has been told by your doctor your baby is blind or an older adult who has had to face the diagnosis of macular degeneration, the vision you had for your life has changed. Vision Forward meets individuals where they are at on their journey of vision loss. We answer questions and help people develop the skills to build the life that they want for themselves.

At Vision Forward our belief is **a little vision goes a long way**. Every day we see people with vision challenges learn new skills and ways of accomplishing their goals, maintain their independence and enjoy the many activities of daily life.

The services we provide are made possible through the support of our donors. Gifts of every level enable us to provide specialized help in a variety of ways — teaching children and adults to learn braille, travel safely and independently, how to use assistive technology to adapt their daily tasks — regardless of a person's or family's ability to pay.

We want to reassure people that they are not alone and that they have a voice and a choice about how they want to live their lives. We work to empower and educate individuals and their families about vision loss, as well as the social and emotional aspects that come with losing one's vision.

“People say that visual impairment is a disability, but I don't understand that because I can do everything they can do!”

2015 Sports Camp Participant

Lori, Dawn and Tiffany

“When you go through this you have no idea where to turn or how to navigate this life. It was a difficult journey in the beginning. **We couldn't have survived without the support we found at Vision Forward.** The staff were amazing — they were like family! And this is a lifelong relationship. Our kids are going to receive services from Vision Forward for the rest of their lives.”



Living successfully is important at every age.

Having vision loss should not impede a person's ability to function in daily life. We help people gain the confidence, strength, and skills to choose and pursue their dreams and goals, whether that be the child learning to walk, a teenager swimming for the first time or an adult getting to work independently. Through Vision Forward people come to "see" the exciting possibilities that exist for them and the power they have to make choices.



Chase and Karter

Chase and Karter were born unexpectedly at 27 weeks, weighing only 1.5 pounds. These two babies were born with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) and had serious physical challenges; their mother April, who had two children at home, faced overwhelming emotional and coping challenges. **She had endless questions about the medical condition and treatment options for her twins.** Feeling alone and scared, April turned to Vision Forward for assistance, and our therapists and teachers helped her make sense of it all. Together they developed a program of services to help her boys thrive. **As a family they've made tremendous progress:** The boys have almost completed their program of therapies and April has learned many treatment techniques she can do at home to assist in their growth and development.



Naomi

Jasmine, Naomi's mother, says, "When Naomi started in Vision Forward's Birth to 3 Program, we thought she was totally blind. To our surprise she quickly went from not tracking things with her eyes to reaching out for her bottle and turning her head towards the person who was talking to her. **A whole new world has opened for her. She's making such progress and is full of confidence.**"

Anthony

“After losing my vision in my 20’s, I thought ‘Why me so early in life?’ The doctors did everything they could for my eyes, but they didn’t teach me how to deal with vision loss. It was hard for me to ask others for assistance, but I knew it was time to stop running and get the help I needed. One of the things I loved to do was cook. Through my training at Vision Forward I learned new ways to operate in the kitchen and how to work safely. I’m back on the stove cooking and I’m happy. I’m very proud of myself. **I can’t stand not doing anything now that I’m ready to do everything.**”



Alex

Our new Technology and Education Center (TEC), which opened in February, helps people like Alex use the latest technology designed for people with vision loss. From the beginning of Alex’s journey at Vision Forward he was open and had a positive attitude. He was able to quickly master his new assistive technology **which was instrumental for him to complete his degree in social work and be able to pursue his goal of helping others.**



Rachel

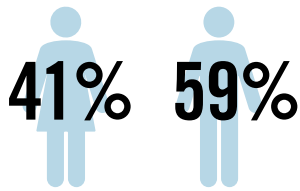
“Losing my vision was very depressing to me. There were several years that I stayed home and isolated myself. **Coming to Vision Forward has brought hope to my life and an understanding that I’m not alone in this adventure I’ve been forced to live.**”

The People We Serve

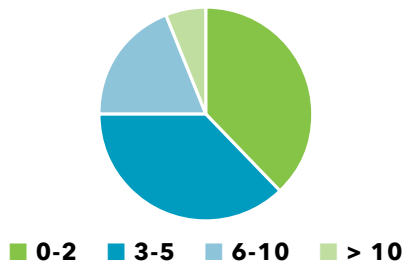
CHILDREN & YOUTH

208
children & youth received
7,665
hours of service

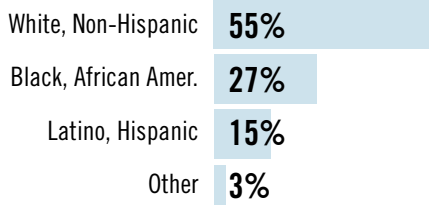
GENDER



AGE



ETHNICITY



89%
showed progress in
skills leading to independence

Clients came from

139

zip codes in Wisconsin

1,001

customers found solutions
through the
Vision Forward Store



Hawley Ridge Apartments
provides safe and
affordable housing for

76

individuals.

Through our
Mobile Store and outreach
we connected with

1,472

people in the community.



Transportation is a significant
barrier for visually impaired
individuals. Our vans logged

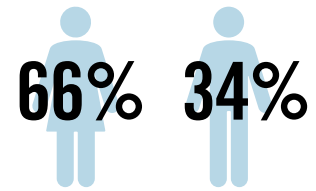
18,000

miles transporting
individuals to receive services
from Vision Forward.

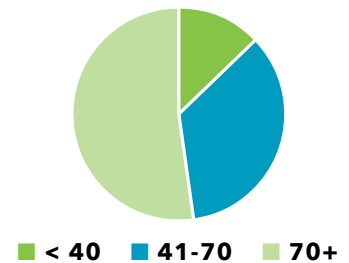
ADULTS

390
adults received
2,362
hours of service

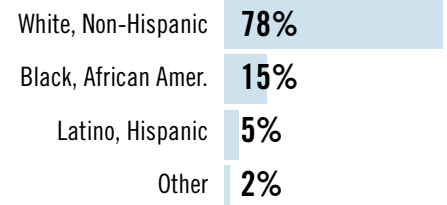
GENDER



AGE



ETHNICITY



91%
developed skills
for independent living

Thank you!

All of the work and successes highlighted in this report would not have been possible without the support of our donors. Philanthropic support helps Vision Forward continue to have an impact on the lives of thousands of people each year who have vision loss. Just as a little vision goes a long way, so does every contribution to Vision Forward. Thank you for your support.

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Vision Forward Association is truly grateful for every gift, in whatever amount, which helps support our vital work. Every effort has been made for accuracy. Should there be any errors or omissions, we apologize and ask that it be brought to our attention by calling the Philanthropy Department, 414-615-0120.

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Kohl's Corporation	Milwaukee Repertory Theater	Saint Vincent Palloti Parish
La Tarte	Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra	Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
Lake Geneva Canopy Tours	Molina Healthcare	Sharon Lynn Wilson Center
Lake Geneva Cruise Line	Morgan Stanley	Shorewest Realtors
Lake Michigan CarFerry SS Badger	Mortensen Portrait Design	Signature Salon & Spa
Lakefront Brewery	Mortgage Guaranty Insurance Corporation	Skylight Music Theater
Lakeshore Chinooks	MSI General Corporation	South Milwaukee Lions Club
Leff's Lucky Town	Mukwonago Lions Club	Spice House
Lela Boutique	National Baking Company	Starr Group
Lessiter Publications	New Berlin Lioness Project	Superior Culinary Center
Libby Montana Bar, Grill & Volleydome	New Berlin Lions Club	Sussex Lions Club
Lioness Club of Sussex	North Shore Country Club	SVA Certified Public Accountants, S.C.
Little Amerricka	Northwest Area Jaycees	The Suburban Woman's Club of Wauwatosa
Little Switzerland	Northwestern Mutual	Thiensville Mequon Lions Club
Locker's Florist	Nu-Meat Technology, Inc.	Thomson Reuters
Lomira Lions Club	Oak Creek Lions Club	Tory Folliard Gallery
Lone Star Beef	Oil & Ash Soap Company	Transfer Pizzeria Cafe
LS & S, LLC	Oilerrie Brookfield	Treiber & Straub Jewelers
Madam Bellis	Oro di Oliva	Tuckaway Country Club
Manpower Group	Paddock Lake Lions Club	Twisted Fisherman
Mary McEntee Trust	Palomino	Union Grove Lioness Club
Maxie's Southern Comfort & Blue's Egg	Pfister Hotel	Union House
McDonald's	Pick 'n Save	United Food Ingredients, Inc.
Medical College of WI – Eye Institute	Plaza Hotel	United Methodist Women of CUMC
Meritage	PNC	United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County
Metro Eye	Precision Gears, Inc.	UnitedHealth Group
Metro Welding and Fabricating, Inc.	Professional Construction, Inc.	Waterford Lioness Club
Metropolitan Maintenance & Landscaping	Prospect Lions Club of New Berlin	Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)	PRP Wine International	West Allis Lions Club
Midland Packaging & Display	Puhl's True Value	West Milwaukee Lions Club
Milwaukee Admirals	Pump It Up	Wild Workouts and Wellness
	Retina & Vitreous Consultants of WI	
	RFP Commercial, Inc.	

Wines for Humanity, Inc.
Wisconsin Energy Corporation
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Wisconsin State Fair
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Zoological Society of Milwaukee

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Foundation, Inc.
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The Brookby Foundation
Catherine A. Hiemer Trust Estate
The Catholic Community Foundation
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Turek Charitable Trust
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Wisconsin Universal Service Fund

TRIBUTE GIFTS

*Tribute gifts are made in honor of
or in memory of someone who has
added special meaning to a donor's
life. Vision Forward Association is
pleased to honor the following peo-
ple, along with their generous family
and friends.*

IN HONOR

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PLANNED GIFTS

By including Vision Forward in their estate planning, this past year the following individuals provided support past their lifetimes for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Dorothy Christeck
Irving Chortek
Mary McEntee

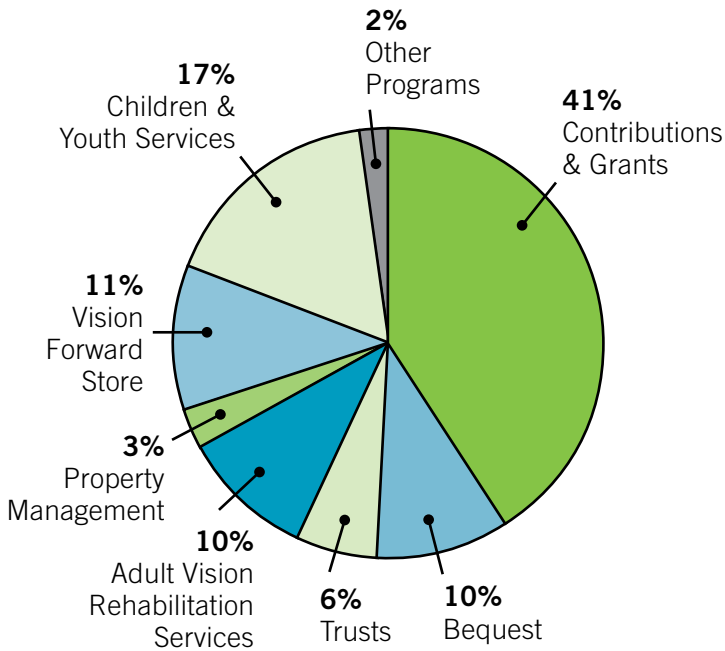
LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society recognizes those who have included Vision Forward Association in their estate planning, providing lasting support for people who are blind or visually impaired.

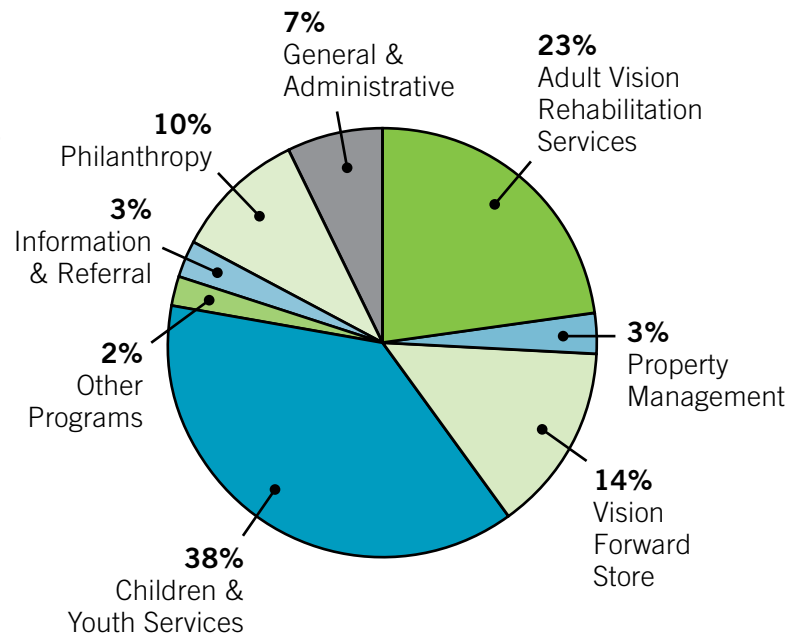
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Pat & Kathy Brockman
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Dr. Thomas & Barbara Burton
Daniel & Mary Corcoran
Dr. Herbert & Ruth Giller
Dr. & Mrs. David Hoffman
Patricia Keating
Barbara Stein
Lisa & Paul Sweeney
Ed & Anne Weiss
William Westphal

Statement of Activities YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2016

OPERATING REVENUE



OPERATING EXPENSES



184 individual volunteers contributed a total of **10,039** hours valued at **\$222,263** to enhance the lives of individuals impacted by vision loss.

SOURCE: INDEPENDENTSECTOR.ORG



Pictured above are just a few of our many fantastic corporate employee volunteers. Left, Robert W. Baird & Co. volunteers spruced up our facility. Right, Employees from ManpowerGroup hosted our Festa Italiana event for adults.

Corporate Sponsors

Vision Forward is grateful for the growing support of corporations in our community. Local companies and organizations often show their partnership by sponsoring or volunteering at our special events. The success of our Dining in the Dark and the Feast for the Senses events relies heavily on event sponsorships. Last year, these two events alone raised over \$200,000, also attracting new supporters to learn about Vision Forward's mission and need for support.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2015-2016 EVENT SPONSORS!



Air Technology Services • Badger Alloys • Dr. Alex Khammar • Molina Healthcare
 Huron Fabrication & Machine Corporation • CureMD • MSI General
 Midland Packaging & Display • Guarino Wholesale Meats



Helping people with vision loss build the life they want.

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