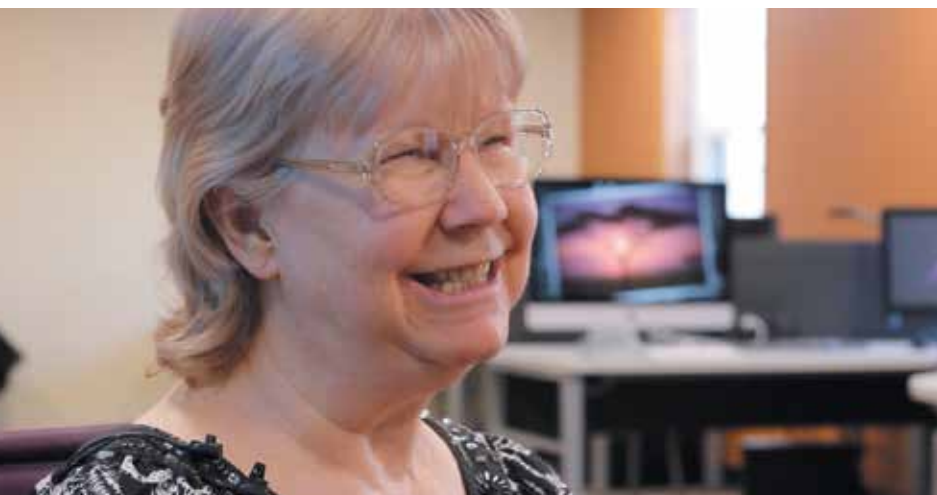


INFOCUS

Through the Lens of Vision Loss



“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.”

– RACHEL | VISION FORWARD CLIENT

► To learn more about Rachel’s story, watch our recent video on services available for adults at vision-forward.org/rachel.

Vision loss in the United States continues to rise, affecting people regardless of age, race, gender, economic status and educational level. Have you ever imagined what life would be like if it happened to you?

When a visual impairment occurs that cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or medical/surgical treatment, the resulting diagnosis is a condition called low vision. Low vision is very frustrating for people because it can make even the simplest daily tasks extremely challenging or even impossible. It can also impede on life’s simple pleasures, such as reading, recognizing people’s faces, taking a walk and engaging in social activities.

Unfortunately, when people find themselves unable to do the things they have always done and enjoyed, the outcome is often depression and social withdrawal. After being diagnosed with low vision, many people linger in a state of uncertainty for as long as one to two years before they build up the courage to seek help. And that’s a loss of precious time.

At Vision Forward we help people adapt to their changing vision and discover new ways of accomplishing their daily goals. We understand that people all experience vision loss differently and our services are individualized for each person’s unique needs.

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Terri Davis

At our Vision Connections Conference in October, I engaged with many participants and heard about their personal experiences. One woman said to me, “Having vision loss is hard. I don’t like it and I don’t know what I’m doing.”

Later I encountered another woman who was tentative when she came upon a flight of stairs. I asked if she would like some assistance and she replied, “Yes. I think these steps going down to the conference room are blue, which makes it very hard to distinguish each step. It looks like one big slide. I’m not sure where one step begins and the other ends.”

Both these women were dealing with the everyday realities and challenges of living with vision loss. As they spoke I could hear the fear, anxiety and sense of loss they were experiencing.

At Vision Forward we support individuals who are dealing with the life-changing impact of vision loss every day. We help them learn new skills so they can optimize their remaining vision, fearlessly walk down a flight of stairs, and have confidence in their abilities. And we make sure they know they are not alone.

For many of our clients, believing isn’t always seeing. They are trusting our staff to provide them with the tools, resources and experiences they need to safely and confidently navigate their way through vision loss.

Your support of Vision Forward helps us continue to guide individuals on their vision loss journey and help them regain faith in their abilities—priceless. •

Through the Lens, cont’d

Some of our services include helping people learn to: properly adjust lighting and contrast features so they can read; use assistive technology devices to operate their appliances, phone and electronic equipment; navigate safely through indoor and outdoor environments; and use communication tools such as a computer and handheld reader.

Vision Forward is also a place where people can come to be with others who are experiencing vision loss and freely talk about how it has affected their lives. We offer support and discussion sessions that help people understand that they are not alone in their struggles and that Vision Forward is here to assist them throughout every stage of vision loss.

“Losing my vision was very depressing to me,” says Rachel, a Vision Forward client. “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.”

At Vision Forward, our services empower people with vision loss, giving them the confidence to move forward and live life to the fullest.

► **If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with an eye disease or is experiencing changing vision, please contact us today at 414-615-0100 to learn about taking the next step in the process of regaining independence. •**

What vision loss can look like:

Macular Degeneration



Diabetic Retinopathy



Glaucoma



Myah’s Story Check out Myah’s story as part of the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County’s 2016 Campaign Success Stories: vision-forward.org/myah

What to Expect with Low Vision Services

Q&A with Dr. Heather Hinson



How You Can Help

Support our Low Vision Clinic and help adults and seniors to continue to live independently.

Low Vision Clinic Wish List

- Visual acuity and diagnostic equipment
- Assistive vision loss products for clients to try
- Specialized exam room furniture, appropriate office furniture and built-in storage spaces
- Fresh paint, carpeting and window treatments

Your partnership with us ensures that low vision services will be available and affordable through our Low Vision Clinic for individuals in our community.

► **Contact Jenny Hauser, Donor Manager, 414-615-0128 or jhauser@vision-forward.org, to learn more about how you can support our mission. •**

Q: What is the difference between a standard eye exam and a low vision evaluation?

A: A standard eye exam evaluates the eyes to identify conditions that may require the use of glasses or contact lenses for correction and to prevent, diagnose and manage eye health issues. When a visual impairment cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or medical or surgical treatment, a low vision evaluation is the next step—an extension of the eye exam. Its primary purpose is to help a person see better when regular eye glasses are no longer effective.

Q: What happens at a low vision evaluation?

A: I begin with a review of a person's medical and eye health history, taking special note of any functional problems a client is experiencing. Problems may include reading, working in the kitchen, driving, maintaining employment, dealing with glare problems, viewing television, using appliances, etc. I help clients understand their eye diseases and then together we develop specific goals for what they want to accomplish.

During the evaluation I complete a magnification assessment to determine the proper amount of magnification a client needs to achieve their goals. I then compare and contrast various tools until we find the ones that are most effective.

I also assess the areas of task lighting, glare and contrast, and introduce clients to non-optical tools and techniques like bold lined paper, check writing guides and large print materials.

Q: What can be learned through a low vision evaluation?

A: Clients learn what they can do right now and the tools that are most effective in helping them on a daily basis. Establishing this information is critical to improving functional abilities and often leads to increased confidence and a more positive outlook on living with vision loss.

Q: What is the best time for a low vision evaluation?

A: The best time for a person to schedule a low vision evaluation is when accomplishing the tasks of everyday life becomes difficult.

► **To learn more about our Low Vision Services or schedule an evaluation, please contact Jackie Frye, Low Vision Program Assistant, at 414-615-0158. •**

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

OrCam "See for yourself"



The OrCam is an innovative, life-changing device for people with vision loss. The OrCam is a pair of glasses with a smart camera attached that is activated by pointing it at an object and pressing a trigger button. Using its powerful processing engine, it interprets visual information, recognizing text and cross-referencing faces and products with items it already knows. The OrCam proceeds to convert the visual information into speech and feeds it into the earpiece of the person wearing the glasses, all in real time.

"As someone who has very little usable sight, I was amazed by the powerful experiences of using the OrCam device," stated Cory Ballard, Vision Forward Assistive Technology Specialist. "What seems like simple tasks for someone with vision—like reading

"As someone who has very little usable sight, I was amazed by the powerful experiences of using the OrCam device..."

— CORY BALLARD

through handouts my children bring home from school or going through our mail—can be very involved and frustrating tasks for someone with vision loss. Using the OrCam I can now easily access print materials without any assistance while conveniently sitting at my kitchen table."

► Vision Forward's Rose Visser, Occupational Therapist, and Cory Ballard, Assistive Technology Specialist, are now Certified OrCam Trainers. If you know someone who could benefit from the OrCam, contact Rose Visser at 414-615-0115 or rvisser@vision-forward.org.



SEE *darkness.*
BE *enlightened.*

Fork, Plate with sunglasses, Knife, Spoon

DINING
in the Dark
NOV. 6, 2016

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DINING IN THE DARK SUPPORTERS!

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Service to Others

“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.” **WARREN BENNIS**



In December two of our Board Officers, **Nona Graves** and **Mike Aprahamian**, who to date have provided 70 years of combined service to Vision Forward, will be completing their service on our Board of Directors. Both Nona and Mike initially became involved in the organization for personal reasons and both remained actively engaged to help us carry out our mission of serving individuals impacted by vision loss. Their reputations as dynamic leaders, good listeners and forward thinkers not only led us through one of this area’s most successful mergers, but also helped set the stage for many more years of successful service to the vision loss community of Southeastern Wisconsin.

As individuals who lead by example, Nona and Mike never lost sight of our mission over the years and have purposefully mentored others to carry forward their visionary leadership. We are truly grateful for their many years of dedication and service to Vision Forward and for their enduring commitment to improving the lives of all those impacted by vision loss.

We also want to acknowledge the steadfast commitment and service of Board Members **Bob Richter** and **Rutheia Renfro** whose terms will also be ending in December.

Thank you to *all of you* for your leadership, time and passion. You will be missed. •

Vision Connections Conference: The first step to seeing things differently

“Excellent speakers, great content, I learned a lot!” **CONFERENCE ATTENDEE**

As part of Vision Forward’s commitment to providing education to the thousands of people living with vision loss in our community, we hosted the second annual Vision Connections Conference at the Medical College of Wisconsin in October.



Special thanks to our conference speakers: keynote speaker, Larry Johnson; Dr. Kimberly Stepien, Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute; Cynthia Owsley, PhD, MSPH, The University of Alabama at Birmingham; Mark Sweet, PhD, Disability Rights Wisconsin; and Vision Forward staff Dr. Heather Hinson, Optometrist; Cory Ballard, Assistive Technology Specialist; Lauren Nelson, OTR, Certified Low Vision Therapist; and Allison Yanasak, Service Coordinator.

Participants also enjoyed listening to a panel of individuals who shared their stories and insights on living with vision loss.

► You can now access the recorded presentations on our website at vision-forward.org/vision-connections-2016 •

Congratulations to the 2016 Scholarship Recipients!

Vision Forward Scholarships Bailey Hart, Kaitlyn Seikert • Arthur L. Ebert Endowed Scholarship Ian Kloehn



912 N. Hawley Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213

Visit vision-forward.org!



- Learn more about our programs and services
- Subscribe to eNews
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OUR MISSION

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



Support us on #GivingTuesday and #seethingsdifferently!

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

- ▶ Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more!  

Save the Date! 2016 Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament

Saturday, November 19

Western Racquet Club, Elm Grove

- ▶ Contact Kelly Lynch, Volunteer/Events Coordinator, at klynch@vision-forward.org or directly at 414-615-0161 to receive more information.

Pictured are corporate employee volunteers from Northwestern Mutual

Thanks, Volunteers!

Thank you to the corporate employee volunteer groups that have contributed their time and efforts to help carry out our mission.

- Lessiter • Walker and Dunlop • Northwestern Mutual • Associated Bank • Rockwell Automation • BMO Harris Bank

