Life-changing support

Dee, Vision Forward Client

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends,



As an organization, our goal is to ensure that children and adults who are blind or visually impaired have access to quality services and information. Vision services are at the forefront of everything we do, whether teaching adults how to use their remaining vision, helping individuals use adaptations that make work and home life easier, or teaching children to engage in their environment so they can learn and grow.

Our efforts to become more person-centered over the last few years have

increased our quality services and positioned us well to continue to grow and evolve as a direct service agency. These efforts include:

- Expanding our preschool to include a two-year-old classroom that offers quality early learning options for toddlers.
- Renovating our Low Vision Clinic and Outpatient Physical Therapy space to provide expanded and improved services to people of all ages.
- Increasing our two-way partnerships with the medical community to help engage and educate adults about vision loss and the resources available to them.

We thank you for your support and commitment to our mission and hope you will share our information with people who need vision assistance. As we prepare to celebrate our 100th year of service, we invite you to join us as we move forward into our next century of service to this community. Together we can make a life-changing impact for those experiencing vision loss.

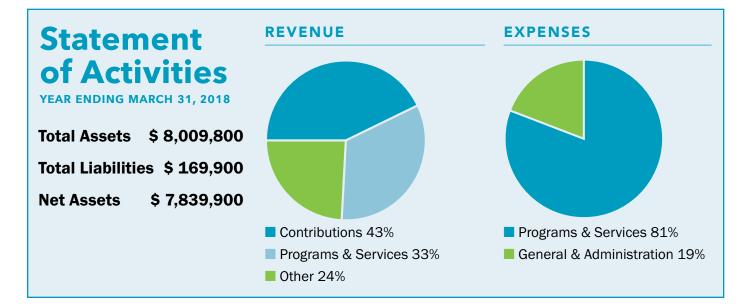
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Thank you to all our donors for your gifts that make a difference in the lives of people of all ages living with vision loss. For a complete list of our donors, please visit our website at www.vision-forward.org/2018annualreport



Your Support Empowers...



91% of adult clients achieved skills needed for independent daily living.

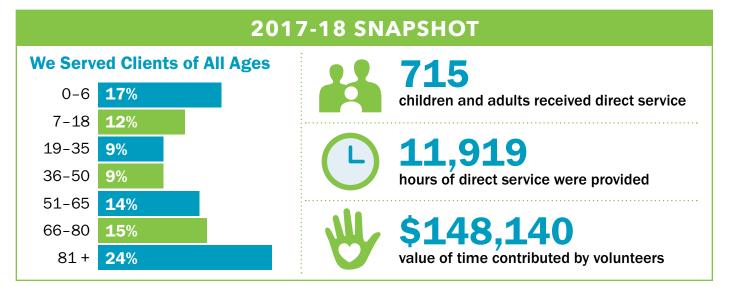
Dee

Shortly after unexpectedly losing his vision, Doyle "Dee" Ward was connected to Vision Forward for support. He was eager to learn how to adapt so he could continue to live self-sufficiently. Dee successfully completed training on white cane use, assistive technology options and daily living skills. Dee states, "The staff empowered me to move on," but it is Dee's optimistic attitude that has allowed him to be successful in navigating through his journey with blindness.

Dee, pictured with his wife Shelly at the Dining in the Dark event, looks forward to working with area schools to educate young people through open dialogue discussions about blindness, dispelling the 'stereotypical' myths. He believes, "It's important to be aware of people in our community that may appear different, but that really want to be treated the same."

Dee continues to participate in discussion sessions where he has been grateful to connect with others who have similar stories. He comments, **"the relationships that I have with the people at Vision Forward have been so significant. There's no judging and I've found sincere support and understanding."**

"I would just like to thank the supporters, organizers and staff of Vision Forward – it is likely you will never fully understand the positive impact you make!"



Past Client of Vision Forward

Educates...



97% of families are better equipped to care for their child with vision loss after receiving services.

McKinley, a child in our recently expanded classroom for two year olds.



Norah

ora is a vibrant, inquisitive and playful preschooler who loves to "wow" the teachers with her progress. But this wasn't always the case.

Shortly after Norah was born, her mother, Andrea, realized that her daughter's eyes were not tracking anything. "It was scary. You don't know what to do," remembers Andrea.

Norah was diagnosed with Septo-Optic Dysplasia with strabismus and nystagmus. These conditions affect her visual acuity, left her with vision in only one eye, and cause her eyes to shake, making it hard for her to visually focus on objects.

Norah's family contacted Vision Forward for help when she was just a few months old. Norah had challenges eating and could not use a spoon or touch food with her fingers. Food textures bothered Norah so her diet consisted of very specific food items that had tolerable consistencies. She also had very high sensory needs and did not enjoy touch or noise.

Norah received speech therapy and worked with a teacher of the visually impaired to improve her eating skills. Norah now eats a variety of foods using a spoon or a fork and drinks out of a regular cup.

Today, at four years old, Norah loves coming to Vision Forward and enjoys being around her classmates. She is talking, engaging in music and mastering the skills to walk independently. This fall she will be off making new discoveries in a K4 classroom.

"I'm just really grateful because I don't think Norah would be where she is today without all the early intervention services she received through Vision Forward," states Andrea.



Our Early Education Program earned Improvement System 4 stars out of 5, through the Youngstar childcare ratings assessment. This demonstrates our high quality of care and best practices in early education.

and Enhances Lives



Over **4,000 people** received information and learned about assistive product solutions through our retail store and outreach efforts.

James

Our Vision Forward Store plays a critical role in helping individuals who are blind or visually impaired discover technology and adaptive devices that make everyday life a little easier. Over the years, James, who has very limited usable vision, has been a frequent customer in the Vision Forward Store, purchasing many helpful products like large print calendars, magnifiers and talking clocks.

On one of his visits James discovered a digital voice recorder, which he finds to be particularly useful. He can use this tool to record a conversation or his own voice leaving messages about significant dates, appointments, shopping lists or other important information, and he finds it very easy to operate.

Assistive products featured in our Vision Forward Store are key to helping individuals like James learn to adapt their daily lives so they can live self-sufficiently with vision loss.

"I enjoy shopping at the Vision Forward Store," says James. "All the staff I've met have been so helpful. I recommend going to Vision Forward to anyone I know who could benefit." •



94% of school-age children stated they had increased self-esteem after participating in our youth activities.

Madalyn Barnes, School Age Program Manager, and Dawson, participant of our Play it Forward Sports Camp. Youth enjoy being physically active, building friendships and learning about the benefits of good health and wellness.

Thank You!

All of the work and successes highlighted in this report would not have been possible without the support of our donors. Every donation to Vision Forward leads to life changing support and services. Thank you for your contribution to our mission.

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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.

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

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"I have been giving to Vision Forward for 10 years, but this year I attended the Feast for the Senses...I'm so grateful for Vision Forward because there are so many kids (as well as adults) that are benefiting from their programs."

Kristin Grace