

in

Sight

fall 2007

The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio

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InSight is published periodically.

Mary J. Westphal, communications director

Elizabeth Stutler, contributing writer

Mission Statement

The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio provides services that maximize the independence of individuals who are blind or visually impaired and minimize the incidence of blindness through education and prevention.



The Sight Center
of northwest ohio

1002 Garden Lake Parkway
Toledo, Ohio 43614

Phone: 419.720.EYES (3937)

Toll free: 800.624.8378

Fax: 419.720.3938

www.sightcentertoledo.org

This publication is available in alternate formats.

WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 15!

"A White Cane is to a blind person like a pencil and paper is to a sighted person," explained Executive Director Dawn Christensen when asked if she thought the use of the White Cane would ever become obsolete. "Do you think that computers available today will one day make the pencil and paper obsolete? Very unlikely and so it is with the White Cane. The White Cane is here to stay!"

Monday, October 15, 2007, marks the 43rd year that our country will recognize White Cane Safety Day and the first year that The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio is launching an awareness campaign.

What is the significance of the white cane? "The white cane is an internationally recognized symbol of the determination of legally blind persons to be independent," explained Orientation & Mobility Specialist John Neely. "Most individuals who use a white cane have some vision that is useful for their orientation and for their mobility. For them a white cane serves two purposes: it prompts respect and safety considerations from motorists. And, by detecting a clear footpath, a white cane allows the traveler to look forward, using his or her vision to gather information about the environment ahead."

**"THE WHITE CANE...
REMINDS US THAT THE ONLY
BARRIERS AGAINST PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES ARE
DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDES
AND PRACTICES THAT OUR
SOCIETY HAS TOO OFTEN
PLACED IN THEIR WAY."**

- Bill Clinton

The original White Cane Safety Day declaration was put in place by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. While each year a new proclamation is made, the proclamation made by President Bill Clinton on October 15, 2000, most eloquently recalled the importance of the white cane as a tool to achieve independence and a symbol of blindness when he proclaimed:

"With proper training, people using the white cane enjoy greater mobility and safety by determining the location of curbs, steps, uneven pavement, and other physical obstacles in their path. The white cane has given them the freedom to travel independently to their schools and workplaces and to participate more fully in the life of their communi-

ties. It reminds us that the only barriers against people with disabilities are discriminatory attitudes and practices that our society has too often placed in their way."

"This effort to increase awareness regarding the white cane is the first of many to come," explained Board Member Cynthia Roepke, CFP. "This year we are starting small with community-wide education and a commitment to build on this effort each year."

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES, WE DID IT! THE SIGHT CENTER CLOSED ITS DOORS AT 1819 CANTON AVENUE ON FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2007, AND OPENED THE DOORS AT OUR NEW HOME, 1002 GARDEN LAKE PARKWAY,

on Monday,
May 21, 2007.
And the phones
have not stopped
ringing since!

Our new home
received great
reviews dur-
ing the grand
opening
celebration –
A New Home;
A Clear Vision;
*A Bright
Future* – held
Sunday, June 17,
2007, and we
continue to host
community out-
reach visits and
tours. To say that
it has been an exciting time in the his-
tory of The Sight Center of Northwest
Ohio is an understatement.

The Building a Vision for the Future
Capital Campaign exceeded its \$1.65
million dollar goal thanks to many pri-
vate contributions made by individuals,
foundations and corporations. I'd like
to extend a heartfelt thank you to the
Capital Campaign Committee mem-
bers who made this possible – Cam-
paign Chairman Bruce Rumpf, Richard
P. Anderson, Bruce Douglas, James
B. Findley, Donald R. Fraser, Rabbi
Alan Sokobin, Robert V. Sterling and,
perhaps most significantly my personal
thanks to the man who set this vision
in place, my friend and mentor John
W. Davies, Jr. Additionally, I'd like to
recognize Wendy Boyle of Boyle & As-
sociates for her friendship and guidance
throughout the campaign.



With the building
now complete, we
are quickly mov-
ing forward with
new energy and
commitment.
Today, I am
pleased to share
that Board of
Trustees of The
Sight Center
of Northwest
Ohio has made a
commitment to
focusing on White
Cane Safety Day
and educating the
community about
blindness and vi-
sual impairment.
In this issue of

InSight, you'll learn about White Cane
Safety Day, recognized annually on
October 15.

Additionally, you will meet Laurie
Brown, one of the first clients to visit
our new home; Velysha Williams, a
Sight Center employee who under-
stands first-hand the importance of the
white cane; and learn about a Novem-
ber 10 fundraising opportunity with
Elder Beerman.

Thank you for your continued
friendship!

With warm regards,

Dawn Christensen
Executive Director

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

GRANT FUNDING SECURED

A special thank you to the following
foundations that have funded grant
requests for specific needs: **Elsie and
Harry Baumker Charitable Fund**
supported a \$5,000 grant for vision
rehabilitation services. The **Clement O.
Miniger Memorial Foundation** supported
a \$10,000 grant for the purchase of a
new vehicle. The **Elson Family Char-
itable Trust** supported a \$2,159 grant for
children's services.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER ENCOURAGES 2007 GIVING

As you are making your decisions regarding
end-of-year giving, please remember that
the Pension Protection Act of 2006
(Pub. Law 109-280) is still in effect. As
enacted, the IRA Charitable Rollover
permits IRA owners age 70 1/2 or older
to make direct gifts from their IRAs to
qualified charities totaling up to \$100,000
per year without suffering any negative
tax consequences. Please speak with your
financial advisor about charitable giving to
The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio in
2007 or direct questions to Mary Westphal
at mwestphal@sightcentertoledo.org

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS STILL NEEDED

The Building a Vision for the Future
Capital Campaign met with great success
having thus far exceeded the \$1,650,000
goal by \$50,000. However, the cost of
construction increased more than 20
percent since the original cost projections
were put in place more than four years
ago. Today the cost of the construction
for the new facility has increased by
\$450,000 bringing the total cost of
construction for the new building to
\$1,200,000. If you would like to make
a gift to the Capital Campaign, please
contact Mary Westphal at 419-720-3937
or mwestphal@sightcentertoledo.org.
All gifts of \$1,000 or more will be
recognized on the permanent donor wall.

THE SIGHT CENTER AND MY WHITE CANE GAVE ME INDEPENDENCE!

On November 2, 1990, a serious car accident left Velysha Williams with glass fragments in her eyes from a shattered windshield. The first thing she realized when she opened her eyes was that everything was “blurry.” Today, Velysha is totally blind, gainfully employed and grateful for the help that she received over the years from family, friends and The Sight Center.

As an insulin dependent diabetic, Velysha’s risk factors following the accident were greater than most. The trauma of the accident caused abnormal blood vessels to develop in her eyes changing her vision forever. Although she could not return to her job as a quality control inspector at The Ford Motor Company, Carey, Ohio, she could continue reading large print publications and watching television knowing, however, that gradual vision loss would likely result in total blindness. For Velysha, the day that she lost any remaining usable vision would be October 31, 1991.

“There is no way to prepare yourself for vision loss,” explained Velysha. “My retina doctors told from the beginning that I would likely be totally blind one day. I simply wasn’t prepared!”

To make matters worse, Velysha had one more great challenge still ahead. The accident had left her in a wheelchair for a year and a half. Suddenly she was totally blind, however, she was finally able to begin walking again! How could she move safely about her environment without any eye sight?

“Although I had been in touch with The Sight Center, it was at this time that they really helped me realize that I could remain independent,” explained Velysha. “I began working with an orientation and mobility specialist learning to use a white cane. And they cut me no slack! By March 1992, I could move safely about the community with my white cane – navigating sidewalks, steps, crowded areas, catching the bus, changing buses, crossing busy intersections. I was scared to death back then! Today, with the use of my white cane, moving safely about the community is second nature to me.

“My goal was always to get back to work,” Velysha continued. “I felt so isolated not working. With all the skills learned from The Sight Center, I was finally ready to work again. Fortunately, someone at The Sight Center saw something in me.

At first I began answering phones as a volunteer. In November 2001, I was hired to work part-time at the switchboard.”

Today, Velysha continues to work as a receptionist at The Sight Center and she has taken on additional responsibilities in the area of adaptive computer technology. “As a graduate of Macomber Whitney Vocational School’s computer and data entry program as well as a graduate of Owens Community College, Velysha was a logical person to begin working with visually impaired people who need adaptive computer training,” explained Executive Director Dawn Christensen.

After 16 years of being blind, Velysha is grateful to be independent and impressed with the magnitude of programs, services and resources available today. “There is so much more available today than there was at the time of my accident. There is a great deal of help and hope for people who are blind or visually impaired no matter what the age or the problem. And The Sight Center is a great resource!” she said.



Velysha Williams says that moving safely about the community is “second nature” thanks to the use of her white cane.



A BRIEF WHITE CANE HISTORY

James Biggs of Bristol, England, is believed to have invented the white cane in 1921. After an accident claimed his sight, the artist decided to paint his walking stick white so that he would be more visible to motorists.

In 1931, Guilly d’Herbemont launched an effort to establish a national “white stick” movement for blind people in France. This effort spearheaded a similar campaign by rotary clubs throughout the United Kingdom. In North America the introduction of the White Cane is attributed to the Lion’s Clubs. From this point forward, the white cane began to make its way into public policy as a symbol for people who are blind.



A New Home.

A Clear Vision.

A Bright Future.

“A New Home; A Clear Vision; A Bright Future captures the impact that The Sight Center is making in the community since it opened its doors at 1002 Garden Lake Parkway on Monday, May 17, 2007. Grand opening activities held in June 2007 included a reception for donors and friends followed by a community-wide celebration which showcased this state-of-the-art vision rehabilitation facility!

“This new home is supported by a clear vision for helping people move from low vision to independence,” explained Executive Director Dawn Christensen. “The Sight Center’s commitment is simply to offer people experiencing low vision or blindness the necessary tools and resources to remain independent at work, at home and at play.”

A new home and a clear vision add up to a bright future for The Sight Center as demonstrated by the Helen Keller mosaic and quote that appear in the new building’s lobby area. “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” sets the standard for a future filled with the spirit of help, hope and giving that will take vision rehabilitation services throughout Northwest Ohio to a new level.

“The need is immense. An estimated 170,000 people throughout the Center’s 16-county service area are experiencing life altering vision challenges,” according to Ms. Christensen. “Nearly 60,000 of those are aged 60 and over, and those numbers are expected to double as the Baby Boom generation ages.”

The new facility offers a more efficient, cost effective delivery of care, improved programs and services, and increased opportunities for professional



collaborations. The comprehensive vision rehabilitation training available in the new setting will extend the time that people can remain independent in their own homes while reducing health care costs due to lengthy assisted living and nursing home stays.



Working in one of the new exam rooms, Dr. Jill Holler, left, demonstrates some of the benefits of increased magnification for Anna Law.

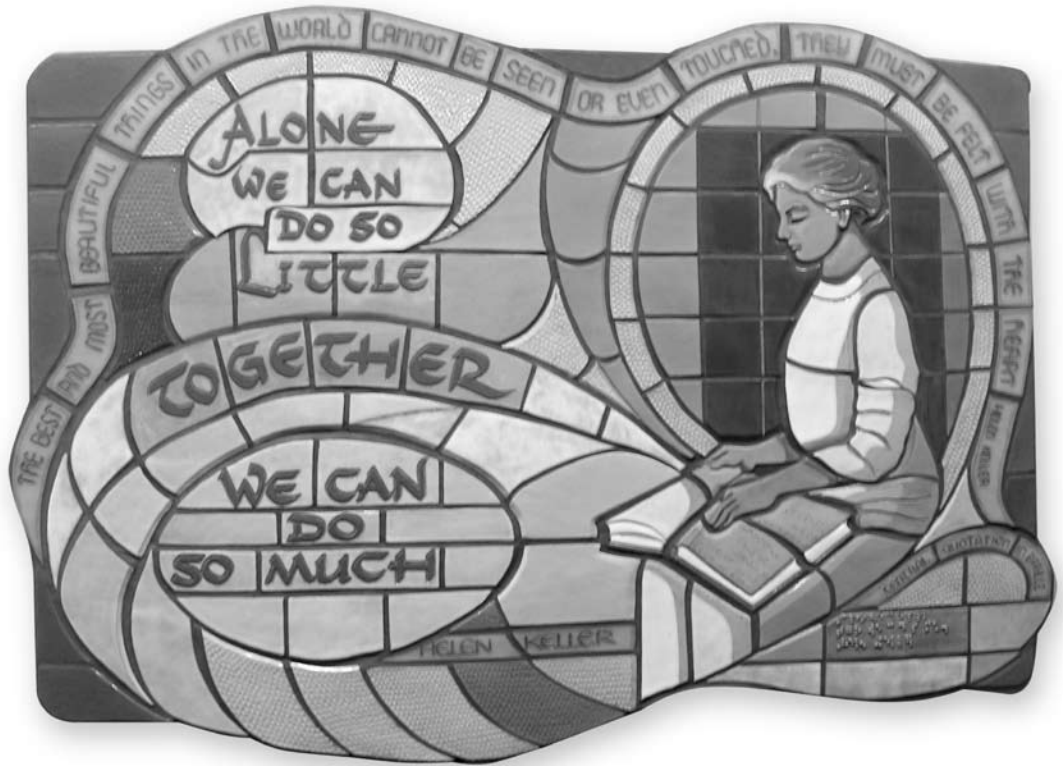
LOBBY MURAL REFLECTS SIGHT CENTER PHILOSOPHY

One of the first things you see upon entering The Sight Center's new home is a ceramic mural of Helen Keller with two of her most famous quotes prominently displayed.

"Alone we can do so little; Together we can do so much" appears in the center of the mural with the Braille version at the bottom right corner of the mural. The other quote – "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, they must be felt with the heart" – wraps gracefully around the outside border of the four by six foot mural.

"We chose these particular quotes because they are truly a reflection of the philosophy here at The Sight Center," explained Executive Director Dawn Christensen.

"We were looking for something that would be tactile so that our visually impaired and blind clients could feel comfortable touching the lobby artwork," added Beth Stutler, communications/development assistant. "I was familiar with the ceramic mosaics on the Lourdes Campus and reached out to Sister Jane



Mary Soroziak, OSF, at Lourdes College. Her vision for this piece was exactly what we were hoping for."

The mural, created by Sr. Jane Mary Soroziak with the help of Sr. Josephine Dybza, offers a constant reminder to all who enter the building that The Sight Center

staff cannot change lives alone. It is with deep gratitude to all who contributed to this new building as well as those who lend continued support to programs and services that we are able to change lives by increasing independence for people facing vision loss.

NEW HOME DESCRIBED AS "WARM AND WELCOMING"

"My grandmother came here; my mother came here and now I'm here," said Laurie Brown of Archbold. "Hopefully, you won't see my daughter here. But, at least I know you will be here if she needs you."

Laurie was one of the first clients to visit The Sight Center's new home located at 1002 Garden Lake Parkway, off of South Detroit near Arlington. Diagnosed with macular degeneration at age 58, she understands the challenges ahead better than most. As a small business owner, she is taking a very proactive approach to the challenges that she knows she will face.

When she entered the new vision rehabilitation facility, she could simply



Occupational therapist, Laurie Madrazo, OTR/L, demonstrates some magnification and lighting options that will help Laurie Brown, left, maximize her vision.

say, "Wow, this is a great deal different than your old location!" After stops in the low vision clinic, the optical area and the adaptive technology area, she was ready to stay. "This location is easy to find, everything is warm and welcoming, and I love the staff. Can I stay?" she asked.

Laurie's reaction to The Sight Center's new home has become the norm. Clients, staff and friends recognize that this new home offers an important step in maximizing independence for people who are blind or visually impaired.

IN APPRECIATION

DONATIONS

January 1 thru June 30, 2007

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Correction

Kiemle-Hankins Company was mistakenly omitted from the donor list that appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of InSight. Our sincere apology for the oversight.

BEQUESTS

Catherine J. Hettrick Estate
Hellen R. Lumbrezer Estate

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ONLINE GIFT PROCESSING COMING SOON!

We have received feedback that you would like to have a more convenient online donation option available for The Sight Center. So, we are in the process of updating our online payment processing opportunities. Keep an eye on our website, www.sightcentertoledo.org, for easier gift giving opportunities...it should be live in the next several weeks. A special thank you to those people who have reached out to tell us of your interest in this giving option. Thank you for your continued support and friendship!

SIGHT CENTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

John J. Tarp, controller, Thread Information Design, Inc/Lauerer Markin Goup Inc., joins The Sight Center board with more than 10 years of finance experience. He is a long-time Toledo resident with a desire to give back to the community.

WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

Janice Green, COTA, joined The Sight Center as a certified occupational therapy assistant. With an associate degree in applied science from Lourdes College coupled with an associate's degree in business management and a bachelor's degree in individualized studies from the University of Toledo, Janice brings more than 17 years of experience serving as an occupational therapy assistant.

D'Anna A. Moran, more commonly recognized as Dani, joined The Sight Center staff as a rehabilitation teacher. Dani holds a bachelor's degree in social work and



Janice Green



D'Anna A. Moran



Sharon Pheifer



Bonnie Schefdore

master of arts degree in blind rehabilitation from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Previously employed at the Hines VA Medical Center, Hines, Illinois, Dani brings nearly 10 years of blind rehabilitation experience.

Sharon Pheifer joined The Sight Center team as an executive administrative assistant. A graduate of Columbian High School, Tiffin, Ohio, Sharon has completed additional coursework at The University of

Toledo. Previously employed at CB Richard Ellis, Reichle Klein, Sharon brings nearly 10 years of administrative experience.

Bonnie Schefdore has accepted the position of case manager at The Sight Center. A member of The Sight Center team since 2000, Bonnie most recently served as a vision service representative. Bonnie holds a bachelor's of arts degree from the University of Toledo and will graduate with her master's degree in vision rehabilitation counseling next year.

SHOP ELDER BEERMAN WESTGATE NOVEMBER 10!

From now until November 10, The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio is partnering with Elder Beerman at Westgate through the sale of coupon booklets, good toward store merchandise purchased on Saturday, November 10. With 100% of booklet sales benefiting The Sight Center and other participating non-profit organizations, you can feel good going shopping and great about giving back!

The coupon booklets can be purchased through The Sight Center for just \$5.00. Each booklet contains one \$10 off the purchase of \$10 or more and eight 20% off coupons. To purchase your book, please call Beth Stutler at 419-720-3937, ext. 106, or stop by our new home at 1002 Garden Lake Parkway. Please call before stopping out to be sure that we have enough booklets on hand to meet your needs.

SIGHT CENTER HOSTS TOURS, MEETINGS

This fall, The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio is hosting groups in our new home for tours. If your group is interested in touring our new facility and learning more about us, please contact Mary Westphal at 419-720-3937, extension 105, or email at mwestphal@sightcentertoledo.org with the words "community outreach" in the subject line.

Feel free to host a brief business meeting of your group following the tour. We can accommodate groups up to 25 people.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are updating all of our records. Please take a moment to let us know if any of your mailing information has changed or if you are no longer interested in receiving information from The Sight Center of Northwest Ohio. You can update your information by returning this card to us at 1002 Garden Lake Parkway, Toledo, Ohio 43614 or by sending an email to bstutler@sightcentertoledo.org. Please put "mailing list update" in subject area. Thank you.

- Yes please keep my name on your list
- Yes, keep my name on your list, but please make following changes
- Please remove my name from your mailing list at this time

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

MEANINGFUL GIFTS!

What do you buy as a gift for the person who has everything? That's a question many of us struggle with at birthdays, anniversaries and holidays. This year we've had several friends suggest that a donation be made to The Sight Center in their honor. Such a gift has many benefits...most significantly, it lets your loved one know that he/she has been remembered. In addition, your gift makes a difference for someone who is facing vision loss. Finally, your gift is fully tax-deductible! The Sight Center will send an acknowledgement of your gift to the honored friend. For more information, contact Mary Westphal at mwestphal@sightcentertoledo.org or visit www.sightcentertoledo.org.



The Sight Center
of northwest ohio

1002 Garden Lake Parkway
Toledo, Ohio 43614

www.sightcentertoledo.org

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