

LIVING WITH BLINDNESS:

Cheri Abare

At the tender age of 14, Cheri was diagnosed with diabetes. Instead of the traditional activities associated with a spirited teenager, she was busy with insulin injections, diabetes workshops at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston and several hospitalizations.

Unfortunately for Cheri, life was to become more difficult. As she looks back, she admits that she didn't take her diabetes that seriously. "I was my own worst enemy." Her health rapidly started to decline. Her eyesight all

but disappeared. A 4-1/2 year stay in a nursing home marks her twenties. At the age of 29 and several surgeries later, Cheri was determined to live her life and regain her independence.

Obstacles were plenty: health, housing, finances, and extreme low vision. Perseverance and the support of her mother led her to the New Hampshire Association for the Blind. "If I hadn't met Jewett (*Orientation & Mobility and Rehabilitation Instructor*), I probably wouldn't have gotten out of the nursing home." Under the guidance of the Association's trained staff, Cheri learned to monitor her blood sugar with a talking glucose meter, measure her insulin without guessing, walk with the aid of a white cane, and navigate the surroundings. Cheri



Cheri Abare

moved into her own apartment and she joined the Monadnock Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind. Now serving as its President, she finds herself busy lining up speakers, organizing meetings and advocating for the visually impaired.

With a warm smile and an infectious giggle, Cheri embraces life and looks forward to the future. Her diabetes is under control but she never knows what to expect with her vision. Every morning she greets the day looking through a thick fog. Slowly the cloud lifts and shades of gray blossom to fields of color. While she is able to read with the aide of a magnifier, she can only see shadows of figures in the distance. Cheri has learned to adapt and has come to realize that for her, nothing is really different between her and a sighted person that a

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Inside this Issue:

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On a beautiful Indian Summer day, the Association received a significant gift from the late Frank and Elizabeth Touhy, long-time donors. This generous donation from the Frank P. Touhy Trust was hand-delivered by the Touhy's daughter, Sheila Congdon, and will provide substantial support for our essential vision rehabilitation services. We are honored by this special legacy which will enable us to change even more lives in a powerful way, creating opportunities for living fully and independently, and express our deepest gratitude to the Touhy-Congdon Family.



Graduates from the first “Diabetic Cooking Class” series pose in the training kitchen at the McGreal Sight Center with kitchen gadgets and aprons generously donated from Things Are Cooking. For more information on class offerings, please contact Sarah Dorsch, Rehabilitation Teacher, at 1-800-464-3075.

Current newsletters and Annual Reports are available in Braille, on disk, and on audiocassette. If you prefer to receive future editions of our publications in one of these alternate formats, please call the Association at **1-800-464-3075**.



This Newsletter is published by the **New Hampshire Association for the Blind**, 25 Walker Street, Concord, NH 03301. For more information call **1-800-464-3075**. Visit our website at **www.sightcenter.com**.
Editors for this issue...
Karen Jantzen and Nancy Burgess; Contributors...
Kathy Carroll, Lynne Saltonstall, Jane Roy, Susan Stearns, Claudia Libis and Guy Woddlund.

Living With Blindness — Continued from 1

little modification and education can't fix. "It's possible to do almost anything...except drive a car. But, that may be coming!"

While her health is still fragile her spirit is strong; her attitude tenacious. She is looking forward to receiving a CCTV and hopes for a computer. The Association has already helped her access correspondence classes through the Hadley School for the Blind. She studied Braille, learned the

abacus, and completed courses in Business Law and Psychology. Cheri is excited to start classes this fall in the Human Services field. Her goal is to receive her certificate and get to work! Ultimately Cheri hopes to combine her personal experience with her education, and aid others with disabilities to enjoy life to the fullest and realize their own unique potential. ♿

Educational Services Program

The Association is pleased to announce the addition of an Educational Services Program to its core services. This initiative is made possible by the award of a significant three-year grant from the Gibney Family Foundation. This funding supports the position of a Teacher for the Visually Impaired. The program has already expanded since it's launching in August with the hiring of an Orientation and Mobility Instructor specializing in student services. We look forward to partnering with school districts throughout the Granite State to meet the needs of students with serious vision loss. Questions regarding our Educational Services should be directed to Guy Woodland, VP for Rehabilitation, 1-800-464-3075. ♿

Core Service Spotlight:

What is O&M?

“O” is for orientation, or rather the ability to know where you are and where you want to go. “M” is for mobility, or rather the skills to get you from where you are to where you want to be. Today’s world depends heavily on visual cues to make orientation and mobility happen successfully for the fully sighted. Without little or no vision it becomes very challenging to know what is in the surrounding environment and how to travel safely, efficiently, and independently in public.

To assist in breaking down these barriers between the visually impaired and the world at large, the Orientation and Mobility Specialist bases the instruction upon the individual’s capabilities and goals. Provided at home and within the client’s community, instruction includes developing a concept of one’s surroundings, developing skills for balance and movement as well as developing a heightened awareness through the use of other senses such as sound and smell. With the confidence these skills bring, the client is prepared for walking with a guide and walking with a cane.

One of the greatest gifts the O&M Specialist brings is to enable the client in traveling safely outside the home. At first this is within the individual’s own community by planning routes of travel around a home neighborhood; negotiating the grocery store; traveling safely at the mall. Over time the barriers are removed and the individual learns techniques to use public transportation and to navigate unfamiliar environments.

Orientation and Mobility is generally the same for adults and children. The difference is that in children, quite often the loss of vision has happened at birth, or very soon thereafter. They have no idea what they are missing, except they know that others do things they cannot. O&M training begins with their concept of body in space and develops along with their natural growth and environments maturation, throughout their school years; meeting needs as they go along. The Association is pleased to now offer this service as a component of its new Educational

Services Program to school districts throughout the State.

Mastered Orientation and Mobility skills are marked by positive attitudes about oneself, improved recreational and social involvement, and gainful employment; fear and frustration are replaced by self-confidence and anticipation of adventure. In a word — *independence.* 🐾



The Dog Guide Users of New Hampshire are a group of people that have or are interested in Dog Guides. A social group with a real purpose, Dog Guide Users gives support to each other as Dog Guide users and helps each other with Dog Guide issues, as well as educating the public about our dogs. Anyone who might be interested in getting a Dog Guide is welcome to attend our meetings and learn about what is involved. A number of Dog Guide Schools are represented among our members. In addition, a library of information about the different Dog Guide Schools is available.

Our lunch meetings are held at the Red Blazer Restaurant in Concord Dutch treat. The group meets quarterly, the second Saturday in January, April, July, and October from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm. Occasionally speakers are brought in to address different aspects of our dogs. There is always time for discussion on various subjects or concerns of attendees. Puppy Raisers often join the meetings and are always welcome.

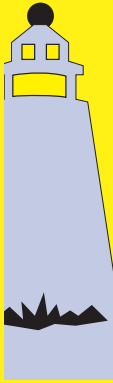
For more information contact:

Carol Holmes at 603-434-6042,

email: cholmes33@Comcast.net, or

Phyllis Fitzpatrick at 603-868-2123,

email: torwood@earthlink.net. 🐾



Seacoast Services Update

Beginning in October, Parrott Avenue Place is offering a series of educational workshops for seniors, their caregivers and others who serve them. As a partnering agency, the Association is pleased to be included.

Through a generous grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, the Association will present two workshops, "Managing Diabetes with Vision Loss" in Concord at the McGreal Sight Center, and again in Portsmouth. Topics to be covered include nutrition, skills training, and demonstration of diabetic devices — all geared to assist the blind or visually impaired diabetic with effectively managing their diabetes and minimizing, if not preventing, further serious vision loss. The Association is also the recipient of a recent Community Impact Grant from the United Way of the Greater Seacoast. This important funding will provide technical aids and devices for our low-income Seacoast area clients.

We celebrated the first anniversary of our Rochester Low-Vision Clinics in September thanks to generous funding from the Frisbie Foundation. Dr. Ken Clark (*pictured*) and Denise Caruso, Low Vision Therapist/Rehabilitation Teacher Assistant, hold these monthly clinics at Rochester Eye Care Associates.

For more information on these offerings and other seacoast programs, please call our Portsmouth Office at (603) 431-9401.



WELCOME!

The Association is pleased to welcome **Andre Taliberte**, Social Work intern from the University of New Hampshire. Andre will be providing intake and counseling services during his time here at the Association. **Jessica Hayes**, receptionist, is the new friendly voice directing calls. **Claudia Libis**, Teacher of the Visually Impaired (*pictured above with Guy Woodland, VP for Rehabilitation*), and **Kathy Cooper**, Orientation & Mobility Instructor, joined the Association's new Educational Services Program. We look forward to the valuable contributions our newest staff members will make to our work.



Carl Augusto, the President of the American Foundation for the Blind, visited the Association to experience the training facilities for the new Daily Living Skills programs now offered at the McGreal Sight Center. Classes range from personal grooming to computers to sewing.

Volunteer Spirit



Lynne Saltonstall, Volunteer Administrator, shows Congressman Jeb Bradley around the recording studio during his visit to the McGreal Sight Center in August.


Today, there are eleven recording studio volunteers. The Association wishes to express our deep appreciation to these volunteers — Irene Ackley, Dan Comly, Dan Donahue, Alix Guerin, Bob Jursik, Kristina Mai, Don Nelson, Stu Richter, Kevin Smith, Michael Vallee, and Andrew Walsh. Most of them came to us with a desire to read for the blind and visually impaired, and as an added benefit found they became studio technicians as well! These dedicated volunteers pioneered this very young and worthwhile endeavor.

The Association's Technology and Braille program opened the recording studio at the McGreal Sight Center during the summer of 2002. Here a growing cadre of volunteers adhere to the Association's mission "to advance the independence of persons who are blind and visually impaired," by recording a variety of materials such as diabetic handbooks, cookbooks, wills, newsletters, annual reports, and special requests from consumers.

In 1998, Three Links Visual Recourse, Inc., formally known as I.O.O.F. Eye Bank (International Order of the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs) partnered with the New Hampshire Association for the Blind to create a state-of-the-art-recording studio. Initial funds were used to purchase a tape recorder and duplicating machine that enabled copies of tapes to be made quickly and efficiently. During this start-up time, Stuart Richter, an NHAB volunteer, donated many hours and provided the expertise in the design

of the digital studio we have today. In the spring of 2002, the logo of the I.O.O.F. was hung at the entrance during the Grand Opening ceremonies for the new and improved recording studio.

In the fall of 2002, two volunteers were instrumental in providing more in-depth training to fellow volunteers and staff. Andrew Walsh had considerable expertise with Cool Edit Pro, the digital audio editing program installed in the Studio computer. Don Nelson who had been a volunteer for both a Radio Reading Service and the Talking Book Program for the Library of Congress, brought extensive experience in narrating and voiceovers for radio, TV, and film.

Because of our dedicated volunteers and the long-standing support of Three Links Visual Resource, Inc., the Association is able to better meet the needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired in this powerful and meaningful way. If you would like to become a volunteer with the New Hampshire Association for the Blind in the Recording Studio, or to learn about other volunteer opportunities, please call Lynne Saltonstall at 1-800-464-3075 or (603)224-4039. 

Helen Perkins, a client at the Association for the Blind is a lucky woman! Her daughter, Elaine Plummer is a resourceful woman. Elaine's son-in-law, Clifton Burdette is a handy fellow. Put the two together and you have a winning combination. Elaine knew that her mother needed a device to



help her adapt to vision loss and she knew that Clifton had made a lovely reading table. When Jewett O'Connor, the Association's Rehabilitation, Orientation & Mobility Instructor, visited Helen he remarked at how helpful the wooden table, made by Clifton, would be in adapting Helen's home to help her to fully enjoy life. That was all Clifton needed to hear. He devotes much of his life giving to others and he snatched up another opportunity. In late July, Clifton and his mother-in-law, Elaine delivered six beautifully handcrafted tables to Guy Woodland, Vice President for Rehabilitation. "You get as much as you give" is Clifton's mantra and we are honored to be the recipients of his generous spirit.

Memorial and Tribute Gifts

These thoughtful gifts in memory of a loved one also honor special occasions or individuals. They represent another important way to support the mission of the Association and essential vision rehabilitation services. Tributes to the following individuals were received from May 1, 2002 to August 31, 2003, and we extend warmest thanks to all the donors.

Due to the length of the donor list, we are unable to print the names of the contributors.

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Gifts & Grants

Our corporate, service club and foundation partners play a critical role in helping our clients regain and maintain their independence. Some of these collaborators contribute important annual support for our direct core services. Others provide special project funding for program development or service enhancement initiatives.

All partners are committed to helping New Hampshire residents who are blind and visually impaired be active participants in their communities. On behalf of our clients, the Association's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, thank you!

Since May 1, 2002 through September 2003, the Association has received the following grants and contributions:

For General Service Provision

American Legion Auxiliary #23
Mary Carroll Abell Trust
David T. Adams Irrevocable Trust
Winifred Blair Trust
Matilda Bykowski Trust
Club Marquis de Lafayette
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Robert H. & Gertrude E. Sedgley Fund
Marion E. Stubbs Trust
The Tallman Fund
United Way of Merrimack County
NH/SoME Combined Federal Campaign

For the Transportation Program

The McIninch Foundation (*challenge grant*)

For Technology & Low Vision Aids/Devices

Autodesk, Inc.
BAE Employee Community Fund
(*Greater Nashua clients*)
Bow Mills Bank & Trust

Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation of New Hampshire
New England ADA & Accessible IT Center
New Hampshire Optometric Association
Town & Country Reprographics

For our Assistive Technology Loaner Program

Endowment for Health


For our Seacoast Services Program

Community Impact Grant-United Way of the Greater Seacoast
Frisbie Foundation (Rochester Low Vision Clinic)
Anonymous

Gift of a Lifetime: Eleanor Ferguson Bequest

This past August the Association received a significant bequest from the Eleanor A. Ferguson Trust. The Board, clients, staff and volunteers are truly grateful for this wonderful legacy that will be added to our permanent endowment. Her gift will help to ensure the availability of our high quality vision rehabilitation services for many years to come.

For many years Eleanor A. Ferguson resided in Fitzwilliam, NH and later in life moved to the Rivermead Retirement Home in Peterborough. She was a close friend of Elizabeth Yates McGreal, and served as a member of the Association's Board during the 1970's and 1980's. With a Masters degree in Library Science, she held several positions in the field, including consultant to the New York State Library for library service in state institutions, and the Batavia School for the Blind. At one point in her career, Ms. Ferguson was Executive Secretary of the American Library Association, with staff responsibility for the Round Table on Library Service to the Blind. The needs of the blind, and care for prisoners in jails and penitentiaries remained endearing interests throughout her retirement. Her life was also enriched by her needlepoint work and penchant for classical music.

The NH Association for the Blind is honored to have been a recipient of Eleanor Ferguson's substantial generosity and her philanthropic vision. Her bequest enhances the Association's ability to assist clients to live fully, independently and with dignity. For more information regarding bequests and other planned giving opportunities, please contact Kathleen Carroll, VP for Development, at 1-800-464-3075. All inquiries are confidential, without obligation. 



New Hampshire Association for the Blind

McGreal Sight Center


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The ATM talks!

Throughout the country banking is becoming easier for the visually impaired. In New England, Fleet and Banknorth are leading the field for “money on the go” by offering Talking ATMs at many of their service locations.

For privacy, Talking ATMs are equipped with universal audio jacks for customers to plug in earphones. For ATMs that do not offer voice guidance, the ATMs have instructional guides in Braille. The number of Talking ATMs in the Granite State is growing to meet the demand. For more information on the FLEET locations nearest you, contact their Customer Service Center at 1-800-841-4000. By 2005 all Bank of New Hampshire locations will be outfitted. In the meantime, please check with your local branch. 

We are compiling a list of email addresses to send timely information, and possibly future newsletters. If you wish to be included in this directory, please contact Karen Jantzen at kjantzen@sightcenter.com.

In the Spirit of the Season

For more than 90 years the New Hampshire Association for the Blind has provided direct rehabilitation services statewide, enabling those who have experienced severe vision loss to live independently and with dignity — at home, in the workplace, and in the community.

There’s no better way to celebrate this Holiday Season than by donating to the Association’s Services Fund. Please consider making a gift — celebrating life and hope — as part of your personal and business year-end giving

You may wish to consider a gift of appreciated securities or to create an annuity that offers advantageous tax benefits and an annual lifetime income at an attractive interest rate. Call Kathleen Carroll, VP for Development, for more details. 