

In-Sight

For People Affected by
Blindness and Low Vision

Proudly serving Berks County since 1929

WINTER | 2018

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**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Thursday
May 3
2018**

VISION
and
HEARING
Expo

AT

CROWNE PLAZA
READING



President's Message

**Lori Schermerhorn,
President/CEO**

It always amazes me how quickly the holidays sneak up on me every year. Whether it be cookie baking, shopping for gifts, or holiday cards, I am always playing catch up to the very last minute! At VRC things were definitely bustling with the holiday spirit and parties! Our kids holiday get together was a lot of fun and we all look forward to seeing the kids and how much they have grown since summer! Watching their excitement really puts you in the holiday spirit! The Christmas parties for our clients and the workshop were a hit as well. It's always nice to see everyone having fun and catching up with old friends as well as making new ones! I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season well! The new year is upon us, and we have already begun plans for this year's Vision and Hearing Expo coming up in May, and stay tuned for details of our first '80s dance in the works for the Spring! Here's to making 2018 a great one!

Until next time...

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- Tuesday, January 2:** Insight on BCTV at 10:00AM – interviewing Steve Bobick, Board of Directors Chair of VRC
- Wednesday, January 3:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 1040 Liggett Avenue, Reading 19611
- Wednesday, January 10:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 838 Penn Street, Reading, 19602
- Wednesday, January 17:** Lunch Bunch at 11:30AM at Mimmo's Restaurant and Pizzeria, located at 290 Morgantown Road, Reading 19611
- Wednesday, January 24:** Sight Loss Support Group from 1:00-3:00PM at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604
- Wednesday, January 24:** Caregiver's Support Group from 2:00-3:00PM at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604

FEBRUARY

- Tuesday, February 6:** Insight on BCTV at 10:00AM – interviewing Maureen Taylor and Jamie Pressmann about the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services
- Wednesday, February 7:** Social and Recreational Activity at 10:00AM – Descriptive Movie Day and Lunch at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604
- Wednesday, February 7:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 1040 Liggett Avenue, Reading 19611
- Wednesday, February 14:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 838 Penn Street, Reading, 19602
- Wednesday, February 21:** Lunch Bunch at 11:30AM at CrossRoads family Restaurant, located at 4643 Pottsville Pike Reading, 19605
- Wednesday, February 28:** Sight Loss Support Group from 1:00-3:00PM at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604
- Wednesday, February 28:** Caregiver's Support Group from 2:00-3:00PM at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604

MARCH

- Tuesday, March 6:** Insight on BCTV at 10:00AM – guest TBD
- Wednesday, March 7:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 1040 Liggett Avenue, Reading 19611
- Wednesday, March 14:** Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group at Berks Community Health Center, 838 Penn Street, Reading, 19602
- Wednesday, March 21:** Lunch Bunch at 11:30AM at Deluxe Restaurant, located at 2295 Lancaster Pike, Shillington 19607
- Wednesday, March 28:** Lunch-Learn from 11:30AM-1:00PM with Vali Heist from The Clutter Crew presenting on organization at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604
- Wednesday, March 28:** Sight Loss Support Group from 1:00-3:00PM at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604
- Wednesday, March 28:** Caregiver's Support Group from 2:00-3:00 at the Vision Resource Center, located at 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading 19604

*Please direct all registrations, transportation requests, and questions concerning Social and Recreational Activities, Lunch Bunch, Lunch-Learn, and Sight Loss Support Group to Mark Levengood at 610-375-8407 ext. 120.

*Please direct all registrations/inquiries re: Spanish Speaking Support Group to Alicia Santiago, ext. 122.

*Please do not register for events more than one month in advance.

*Please feel free to consult the Activity Line at 610-375-8407 ext. 123 to receive an audio recording of that specific month's events and instructions for how to register for them.

*Caregiver's Support Group is dependent upon the attendance of the caregivers and their desire for a separate support group.

Our Mission

Our mission is to strive to prevent blindness and visual impairment, and to advocate and provide quality education, support services, and rehabilitation to enrich the lives of blind and visually impaired persons and their caregivers.

Contact us at 610-375-8407

Lori Schermerhorn .ext. 112
President and CEO

Carolyn Krickext. 110
Vice President of Operations

Rosann Straussext. 118
Director of Workshop Services

Ann Heiserext. 114
Caseworker for Vision Screenings

Mark Levengood ...ext. 120
Counselor

Alicia Santiagoext. 122
Social Worker

Joyce Morganext. 125
Activities/Transportation Coordinator

VRC Services Center Hours

Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday and Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Chairperson, Board of Directors
Steve Bobick

President/CEO
Lori Schermerhorn

Editor
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Advertising
Carolyn Krick

Printed by
Reading Eagle Company



by Mark
Levengood

TECH Authority

The Voice Memos App

A common struggle among visually impaired individuals is the emphasis on pictures as a means of capturing a moment or experience. Certainly we will participate in the picture and position ourselves according to instruction from the individual with the camera or smart phone, but inevitably we will never be able to enjoy those pictures. However, I inadvertently stumbled across a solution to at least some of these situations. While exploring my iPhone I discovered an app called Voice Memos. I never downloaded this app, so I can only assume it came as a standard app already installed on the iPhone at purchase. Essentially, this app is a preinstalled digital recorder on the phone. Many visually impaired people will pursue a digital recorder as a means of quickly recording appointment dates and times when at a doctor's office or even phone numbers of people they encounter in public, both of these situations occurring away from their normal means of noting this information in a form that is accessible to them. Naturally a paper and pencil will not work, but a digital recorder suffices. The Voice Memos app will successfully accomplish this same task.

My primary use for the Voice Memos app at this time in my life actually concerns my nieces. As previously mentioned, visually impaired people cannot appreciate pictures, and there are certainly many pictures to be taken of all children, but especially when infants and toddlers in an effort to capture and preserve that stage of life. I began using my Voice Memos app in early 2017 before my nieces even turned a year old to record their cute sounds, laughter, and early attempts at words, which has since evolved into recording them say my name and that of my Seeing Eye dog as well as some of our earliest conversations and songs. Every time they do something adorable, which is frequent, I am trying to record it with my Voice Memos app to relive and experience later, either that week or in the years to come. Therefore, the Voice Memos app has offered me and other visually impaired people with a way of replacing cameras and pictures by providing an alternate means of capturing those special moments in life. A picture might be worth a thousand words, but as a visually impaired individual I can now record those thousand words to appreciate and value just as a sighted person treasures a picture.

If you are visually impaired and you have a digital recorder, then by all means use it, but if you do not have a digital recorder and do own an iPhone, then start accessing this Voice Memos app. I cannot comment on other smart phones having a Voice Memos app or something similar as I am an iPhone user, but hopefully something is available as I have recorded not only special interactions with my nieces, but also important presentations and other family events.



Become a Vision Resource Center Supporter!

Yes, I would like to support the programs and services of VRCBC in prevention of blindness.

Enclosed please find my tax deductible gift: \$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

Designate your gift:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted Support -
Use Where Needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Care Givers Support Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Vision Screening | <input type="checkbox"/> Sight Loss Support Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop Services |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

In Memory/Honor of (please circle one): Please acknowledge my gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I would like my gift to remain anonymous I am interested in learning more about Planned Giving VRCBC is already in my will

Thank you for your support! Make checks payable and mail to:
Vision Resource Center of Berks County, 2020 Hampden Blvd., Reading, PA 19604
or donate on-line at www.vrcberks.org

The official registration and financial information of Vision Resource Center of Berks County a 501©3 may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free (800)732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Dine in the Dark *a Night to Remember*



In our continued effort to raise awareness for the blind and low vision of our community, Vision Resource Center of Berks County along with Kutztown University hosted our annual Dine in the Dark event on Thursday, September 28th, 2017. This year we strived to make this a bigger and wider reaching event by moving to the Crowne Plaza Reading. Cocktail hour opened the evening with a chance for people to mingle and bid on raffle items. At 6 p.m., the blindfolds went on and dinner was served! After dinner, the visual struggles continued when the blindfolds came off and

glasses that simulate a variety of eye ailments were worn at the self-serve dessert stations! Over 150 people experienced a one-of-a-kind evening of education and inspiration with firsthand accounts from clients, staff, and friends of Vision Resource Center of Berks County. It was truly an evening of light being shed in the dark. Many in attendance raved about the food, the presentations, and a humbling appreciation for sight and those who struggle daily with low vision.

VRC sends out a big *Thank You!* to all our event sponsors and attendees!



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Holiday Shopping at *Boscov's*

By Joyce Morgan

Once again the clients at Vision Resource Center of Berks County enjoyed this year's shopping event at Boscov's. The clients had tasty lunch at the Greenery with our volunteer drivers. A special thank you for Nicole Blanski, Regional Manager, Public Relations/Special Events who does a wonderful job of making our clients feel special each year. Thank you to Kathy Gundy, Esta Neugroschel and George Chow and Mrs. Claus who made us feel welcomed as soon as we walked in the door. They provided refreshments, gift bags and a discount coupon. Thank you also to Weezie, Lisa and Jo the gift wrapping team who did a fabulous job. Can't wait until next year!



Apple Picking at Weaver's Orchard

by **Mark Levensgood,**
Counselor

In October we had an apple picking excursion at Weaver's Orchard in Morgantown. Apple picking is an activity that engages many of the senses beyond vision from the feel of the autumn outdoors, to the smell of fall and the sweetness of the apple trees, and even the sounds of the birds chirping and the bugs buzzing around the ripe fruit. Certainly the sense of touch is also engaged as we searched through the tree branches to locate the desired apples, at which time we could compare their sizes before selecting and ultimately picking the choice fruit.

We had seventeen people participate in this adventure, including five very helpful volunteers that provided both transportation and navigation throughout the orchard for the nine clients in attendance. We were blessed with picture perfect weather, sunny and clear blue skies. After apple picking, we traveled to California Bar and Grill for lunch. Overall the day went quite well and the clients truly enjoyed their time in the outdoors.

However, needless to say, the true delight came in the days that followed this event, at least for myself, as I was able to enjoy the tasty fruit of our labor. Hopefully the clients delighted in this aspect as well.



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Children's Holiday Party at VRC



Saturday, December 2 was a day filled with smiles, laughs and tasty treats at the Vision Resource Center. Our child clients and their families came out for an afternoon of Christmas fun. Our first activity was to decorate our agency Christmas tree with colorful balls, lights and ornaments made by the children last year. There even seemed to be a little friendly competition to see who could reach highest on the tree!

Crafts for the day included trees made from paper plates and snowmen made from paper doilies, each one very unique, just like the children who made them. Creativity continued when we decorated our rice krispie treats to look like reindeer, and ate the leftover candy and icing. Everyone's noses were put to the test for a "scents of the season" game, having to guess the contents of jars filled with pine needles, cinnamon, and everyone's favorite...chocolate!

Each child went home with a bag filled with treats and a wrapped gift of either a soft and cuddly stuffed dog or bear. It was a fun time for the children to reconnect with old friends and staff members, and for family members to share experiences and resources with other families. Even Andy, the guide dog of one of our staff members, got into the spirit by "modeling" a paper plate tree as a hat.



Holiday Party Time at VRC!

December 20th and 21st were filled with holiday cheer here at VRC! We and our clients celebrated the holidays with a wonderful meal and entertainment by Lorri and James Duet! Clients sang along as the couple played everyone's favorite holiday tunes! They also enjoyed a variety of desserts courtesy of Sweet Street, and a raffle of goodie bags made especially for the clients. Our workshop crew also celebrated the holidays with a delicious meal, followed by a dance party here at the agency!

Dori Martin Catering catered both holiday parties! What a treat for all!

Thank you to all the staff, agency volunteers, clients, and generous donations made to VRC that help to make these holiday events possible and a huge success for our clients and workshop staff!



Thank you to District 14P Lions Clubs

VRCBC Insight Advertising Policy
All ads submitted to VRCBC Insight for publication will be reviewed by staff for suitability. If there is a question concerning the content of any proposed advertisement, a staff member will contact the advertiser to see if any adjustments can be made.

VRCBC Insight reserves the right to refuse any advertisement deemed inappropriate for VRCBC Insight.

The publication of any advertisement in VRCBC Insight does not imply endorsement of that product, service or company/organization supplying their product/service by VRCBC Insight.

Contact Carolyn Krick for advertising information at ckrick@vrcberks.org

VRCBC In-Sight is published quarterly and is funded by advertising revenues and other donations. You will receive your next VRCBC Insight in April 2018.

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Do You Know Your Eye?

Iris	Conjunctiva
Pupil	Optic Nerve
Retina	Sclera
Macula	Vitreous Body
Cornea	Rods
Lens	Cones
	Blood Vessels



Services provided by Vision Resource Center of Berks County

Vision Screenings The Prevention of Blindness program targets the children of Berks County. This is a free screening service that is provided to children between 3-5 years of age. This service is provided at day care centers, preschools, nursery schools, Head Start Centers, and kindergarten registrations. These screenings are designed to detect eye issues at an early age because the earlier the detection, the earlier treatment can begin. Adult vision screenings are provided at various health fairs and community events throughout the year. These screenings are designed to assess an adult's vision changes.

Sight Loss Support Group This group meets monthly to provide support and problem solving for clients. This meeting is open to individuals who are blind or are visually impaired and their family members, friends, and caregivers. This meeting is designed to discuss the latest technology and medical breakthroughs that may be of interest to the attendees.

Caregivers Sight Loss Support Group This group meets bi-monthly to help other caregivers be a support for their visually impaired family member. Caregivers need the support of others that have experienced the difficulties with complete or partial vision loss and the changes that occur in everyone's life.

Counseling Is available for individuals who are struggling with the adjustment of a visual impairment or blindness. Counselor and client will work together to reach goals that are obtainable. The meetings will be adapted for each client's needs and desires.

Lunch Bunch This group meets monthly at various restaurants throughout Berks County as a means of socialization. This group is open to those with visual impairments or who are blind and their family members, friends, and caregivers.

Assistive Devices A variety of assistive devices are available for individuals to purchase or lease. These items are available to assist an individual with vision issues to lead a more productive and independent life.

Spanish Speaking Sight Loss Support Group This group meets monthly to provide support for those within Berks County who are blind or have vision loss that feel more comfortable within the Spanish speaking community. This group meets to discuss problems and possible solutions for difficulties they are having dealing with everyday life with their visual impairment.

Education Programs Several education programs are available for different age groups of children. These programs are designed to discuss eye health and eye safety rules. Adult education programs can also be performed concerning specific eye issues or ideas for continued independence within the home with a visual impairment.

Information and Referral Services Following an individualized home visit, information and releases are obtained to discuss the best way to assist the client. If further assistance is necessary, referrals are made to the appropriate agencies to best address the client's individual needs for success with their visual impairment.

Workshop Services Employing over 50 visually impaired, blind, or challenged individuals, the workshop promotes developing skill sets unique to each person's abilities and interests. Pride in work done produces a quality product for the customer. Each employee is paid for their specific amount of work performed. All work is done specific to the customer's specifications.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 610-375-8407 or visit our website at www.vrcberks.org



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**Vision
Resource
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of Berks County

In-Sight

For People Affected by Blindness and Low Vision



January

**National
Glaucoma
Awareness
Month**

- Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning and is the leading cause of preventable blindness.
- Currently, more than 3 million people in the United States and over 60 million people worldwide have glaucoma.
- Glaucoma is called "the sneak thief of sight" since there are usually no symptoms and once vision is lost, it's permanent. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing.

***For more information:
www.glaucoma.org***



February

**AMD/Low-Vision
Awareness Month**

- In the United States, the most common causes of low vision are AMD or Age-Related Macular Degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.
- AMD is the leading cause of vision loss affecting more than 15 million adults aged 50 and up.
- Low vision is a general term used to indicate partial sight or sight that cannot be fully corrected with medications, eye glasses, contact lenses, or surgery. Specialized equipment, such as magnification devices and computer access software are used to help sufferers maximize their remaining vision.
- See your optometrist or ophthalmologist at least once a year or if you notice your eyesight becoming blurry or wavy for early detection of AMD.

***For more information:
www.nei.nih.gov***



March

**Workplace Eye
Wellness Month**

- Workplace eye wellness month is a great time to teach your employees about protecting their vision while working. Safety meetings are a great place to discuss eye safety. Training your employees in the proper use of machines and harmful chemicals will help to greatly reduce eye problems.
- Look carefully at plant operations, work areas, access routes, and equipment. Study injury patterns to see where accidents are occurring.
- Establish first-aid procedures for eye injuries, and make eyewash stations available, especially where chemicals are in use.
- It's also a good time to remind employees of off-the-job eye hazards like do-it-yourself work on cars and homes, cooking accidents, sports injuries, yard work, and chemical splashes from cleaners and fertilizers.

***For more information:
www.preventblindness.org***