



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



716-664-6660



[www.cbavision.org](http://www.cbavision.org)

CBA Vision Rehabilitation Services  
510 W. Fifth Street  
Jamestown, NY 14701

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# Message from Departing Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I knew 2023 would be my last year at CBA. I focused on setting the organization up for the next leader. It was a good year! The Dining in the Dark event raised more support for the youth vision screening program than it had since 2018, bringing more sponsors on board than I imagined and a successful auction! We had over 160 guests, again, and meaningful presentations by our clients and Louise Teft award winner.

The Board of Directors at CBA were a great help to me and the organization. They are well suited for their positions and attendance is never below 90%. I appreciate their enthusiasm and support for CBA.

The staff worked hard. CBA is staffed by Debbie Liddell, VTY, O&M Specialist, COTA, our single therapist and Priscilla Shoup, the Administrative Assistant and Blindness Prevention Coordinator. Together they manage all the legally blind clients in both Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties, work with the New York State Commission for the Blind to fulfill the annual contract, screen over 4,000 children for developmental eye conditions and handle a wide variety of phone calls and needs from the community.

The White Cane Awareness Walk in October was another success. It was held across the street from the office in Baker Park. It was a nice dry day, and over 40 friends and new acquaintances showed up to parade around the block and learn about the importance of white cane safety. Thank you to all that supported the event!

Thank you to all who helped us reach our goals this year. I enjoyed getting to know the organizations, donors, friends of CBA and the clients throughout my short term as Executive Director. I know you will welcome Megan Maynard as the new Executive Director. She is uniquely positioned to take over the helm of CBA.

Sincerely,  
Joni Blackman

# Message from New Leadership



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report for CBA Vision Rehabilitation Services. Today's world is rapidly changing, but one thing remains true: CBA Vision Rehabilitation Services is steadfast in its commitment to providing excellent and empathetic care to anyone seeking assistance. Their devotion to clients and the community has been the cornerstone of their identity and purpose for over a century. I am excited to be the new leader of this organization and its mission.

As a former member of the Board of Directors and newly appointed Executive Director, I was drawn to CBA and am deeply impressed by the genuine kindness and service that staff members demonstrate towards clients, colleagues, and the public. This kindness is evident throughout the community and is reflected in the glowing feedback the organization receives. CBA has truly built a reputation that is deserving of the highest praise.

Having worked in the optical field for years, I am aware that vision loss is becoming more prevalent throughout the country due to the aging of the population. Additionally, the increased use of electronic devices has resulted in more vision problems among young people. As time passes, the Vision Rehabilitation services and Youth Vision Screening provided by CBA are becoming increasingly important for our communities. With the help of our grant funders, donors, agency state contracts, and community members, we successfully reach the clients and young people who need our assistance. A big thank you to all who help support CBA!

I am thrilled to now lead CBA and guide the organization towards achieving its goals. Thank you to the staff and Board of Directors for making my transition welcoming and I look forward to what the future holds for this organization and its clients.

*Megan Maynard*

*Executive Director*

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# Message from the President



Welcome to the board and staff of Chautauqua Blind Association for our 2024 annual meeting. We have enjoyed and undertaken significant changes since our 2023 annual meeting, and I consider all the changes to be for the good of the agency, the functions of the board of directors, and for those we serve in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties.

We were fortunate to have had Joni's leadership post-pandemic, a time of uncertainty and adjustment. We were also fortunate to have had her generous lead up to her retirement, along with her crossover to help our new Executive Director, Megan, in her onboarding. We have grown our biggest fundraising event, Dining in the Dark, two years in a row, expanded the community recognition of our yearly White Cane Event, and have returned to pre-pandemic number of people served. These are achievements to be proud of!

Speaking of Executive Directors, we are so glad to have Megan as our new Executive Director. She served the board as President for a number of years, and she has embraced the Executive Director position with the same commitment and drive. She continues to lead with dedication and determination to continue the missions of CBA, and to continue providing services to the vision impaired in our corner of the state!

And through all of these changes, we are so glad to have retained Priscilla and Debbie. They continue to allow the services at CBA to be brought to the community, handle the state reporting requirements consistently, and work closely with the Executive Directors, old and new! Thank you Priscilla and Debbie!

And finally, thank you to the Board of Directors. The experience and expertise of this board allows for professional decision making, essential judgment and input on issues, and critical oversight of this non-profit organization. The Board of Directors supports the Executive Director and staff so that they are more free to bring their services to the community. Thank you to each and all of you.

Sincerely,

Gene  
President, CBA Board of Directors

# Our Impact

110 Clients  
Served in the  
Adaptive Living  
Program

40 Clients  
Served in  
Vision  
Rehabilitation

10 Clients  
Served in Non  
Contracted  
Independent  
Living  
Program

4,307 children  
vision screened  
in 91 locations in  
Chautauqua and  
Cattaraugus  
Counties

1,570 Individuals  
Reached in 19  
locations and  
Educated about  
Our Services  
and Vision Loss

717 Children  
referred for  
professional  
services for eye  
exams and  
potential  
glasses

CBA's mission is to enable  
visually impaired people to  
be active members of their  
community and to provide  
education and services to  
prevent vision loss.



# 2023 Fundraising and Awareness



## **DINING IN THE DARK**

The 11th annual Dining in the Dark fundraiser continued this year, with a more than ever number of sponsors. There were over 160 attendees and inspiring client speakers. The Louise Tefft award recipient was Charles Haenel, whom is a past board member and client, and who has donated several items through the years for our fundraisers. The night was a great success in raising funds for the Youth Vision Screening Program and bringing awareness to the clients we serve in our Vision Rehabilitation program.



## **WHITE CANE AWARENESS WALK**

In October, the second annual White Cane Awareness Walk occurred near our office in Jamestown, NY. We had several clients and their family members, board members, and community members from the Jamestown Lions Club and Frewsburg highschool girls soccer team that joined us as we raised awareness for our clients and the use of the white cane.



# Program Highlights and their Impact

## **Vision Rehabilitation**

This program addresses the need for legally blind individuals to maintain current employment, obtain employment, attend college, receive technology training, and enable them to be prosperous and independent. Training is done at their home, school, or workplace.



## **Brian**

Brian has worked with our therapist, Debbie to maintain his independence, and remain active and confident within his environment. In July 2023 he was able to move into this very own apartment for the first time. He has learned to do his own cooking and cleaning. He also volunteers at the food pantry in Dunkirk, loves to play pickleball and attends Buffalo Bills games.

## **Orientation and Mobility**

Orientation and Mobility, (O&M) refers to the set of skills a person who is blind or visually impaired uses to move safely and purposefully through the environment; basically, the ability to get where you need to go. Clients learn skills to help with their independence, navigate stairs, crossing of streets and use of public transportation.



## **Abigail**

Abigail has been receiving Orientation and Mobility training with our therapist, Debbie. She was born with cataracts and has undergone several eye surgeries. But, she remains an energetic 3 year-old and has learned to become more independent, navigate stairs and now runs circles around her parents.

## **Adaptive Living Program**

This program is for individuals 55+ years old who are legally blind. They receive training in personal care, communication skills, mobility indoor/outdoor, eating meals, home and financial management, and family care. The primary benefit of this program is to allow senior citizens who are experiencing vision loss to function more independently in daily activities

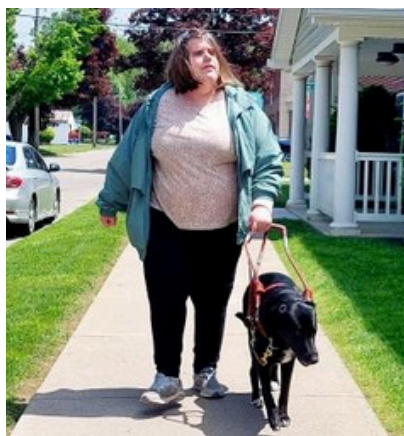


## **Tina**

Tina is one of our clients in the ALP program. She has no family locally in NY with her and has used our services to remain independent, so she doesn't have to move to a nursing home. She enjoys keeping active in leisure activities and has learned to continue reading tasks with the use of her magnifiers and a CCTV desktop magnifier.

## **Independent Living**

This program is for individuals who are legally blind, but are not employed. The program is designed to help clients carry out day-to-day activities. These services are provided based on individual need and may include: orientation and mobility services, rehabilitation teaching, low vision services and devices, social casework and adaptive equipment. But often require less intense instruction to meet their goals.



## **Amy**

Amy has been a long time client of CBA. Recently she had to retire her guide dog and revert back to the use of her white cane, which required some training with our therapist. CBA is a key element to assisting our clients in obtaining guide dogs. With our help, Amy now has received a new guide dog and continues to work with Debbie to gain skills to help her successfully walk her neighborhood.

# Youth Vision Screening Program



**In 2023, CBA screen 4,307 children in 91 locations in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties.**



CBA's Vision Screening Program is a FREE Vision Screening provided in public and private schools in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. Our goal is to identify young children who may have a vision problem and refer them for eye exams with local professionals. Early vision screening before a child learns to read and write, along with eye safety educational information is a great beginning to a lifetime of healthy vision. This program is funded by local donors, grants, and fundraisers.

In 2023, there were 717 children referred on for eye exams and possible glasses once they were vision screened. CBA Vision Rehabilitation Services founded the Dr. Tim Grace Sight for Success program in 2019 to coincide with our Youth Vision Screening. This fund helps assist children financially, if in need, and help them to receive the proper eyecare. CBA relies on fundraising and donations to fund this program. We thank the Grace Family for being continued supporters of this program.



**Dr. Tim Grace**  
**Sight for Success Program**



# Thank you!

## Leadership and Staff

### **Board of Directors 2023**

**President** - Gene West (June - Dec)  
Megan Maynard (Jan-June)  
**Vice President** - Eric Harvey (June - Dec)  
**Treasurer** - Dan Stone  
**Secretary** - Mallary Tyler Dawson

#### **Members at Large:**

Corinne Case  
Lisa Cleveland  
Mike Herlong  
Tim Lacroix  
Zachary Hnatyszyn  
Hayden Senn

### **Staff**

**Joni Blackman** - Executive Director  
(retired Dec 2023)

**Debra Liddell** - Vision Rehabilitation  
Therapist/Orientation & Mobility Specialist,  
COTA

**Priscilla Shoup** - Administrative Assistant and  
Blindness Prevention Coordinator

### **Funding Sources and Grants**

New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)  
Chautauqua Region Community Foundation  
Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation  
United Way of Northern Chautauqua County  
United Way of Southern Chautauqua County  
United Way of Cattaraugus County  
William B. Anderson & Juliet J. Anderson Rosch  
Charitable Foundation  
Winifred Crawford Dibert Foundation Fund

### **Fundraising Sponsorships and Donors**

Wegmans - Fresh and Fancy Floral Design Studio - Dunkirk Fredonia Lions Club  
Novel Destination - Stone Audiology - Shults Auto Group - Ahlstrom Schaeffer  
Chautauqua Eyecare - Seneca Resorts & Casinos - Spectrum Eyecare  
Slone Melhuish Insurance - The Resource Center - Bayview Financial Group  
Law office of Andrew Robinson, Jr. - Chris Cook Architecture, P.C - Dave Snow State Farm  
Jamestown Lions Club - Michael Lahood, MD, PC - American Eye Care Optometric Centers  
Lind Funeral Home, Inc - Cattaraugus County Bank - Lenny Sales - The Grace Family

**Give Big CHQ and Cattaraugus Gives donors:** Julianne Johnson, Michele Windus, Gene West, Dan Stone, Danielle Marx, Anne Brunenavs, Carol Hardenburg, Eric Harvey, Andrew Robinson, Megan Maynard, Carrie Wolfgang, Willow Fodor.

## Individual and Church Donors

Jean Buffamante  
Jeanette Peglowski  
Elizabeth Woll  
Ellicottville Eye  
Betty Woltz  
Pilgrim United Church of Christ  
Napoli Church  
Lawrence Bourne  
Karen Peterson Dennerlein  
Judith Presutti

Jody Seaton  
Anonymous Donor  
Frank Kempisty  
Mary Budzinski  
Patricia Kinney  
Kimberly Mead-Colgrove  
Patricia and Daniel Astry  
Robert Kopin  
Grace Perez-De-La-Garza  
Matthew Swanson

***CBA gratefully appreciates everyone's continued support.***

***Thank you for your donations!***

### **2023 Memorial Donations** **CBA received memorial donations** **to honor the memory of:**

Loretta Nikitas  
Paul Crowe  
Charles Dankert  
Thomas Galbato  
Emmet and Donna Raye Shirey  
Dr. Timothy Grace  
Leona Smith

**Thank you to those who remembered their loved ones by way of a  
Memorial Gift to CBA**



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