

## **Message from the Executive Director**

At BCABVI, we are always developing new ways to meet the evolving needs of our clients and community. Here are some highlights of what we are working on this summer:

### **Children's Services**

On August 24, 2016 from 2:00 -5:00 pm BCABVI will hold our first Children and Student Low Vision Day at our Newtown Facility. Families can explore a range of services, assistive equipment and recreational programs available in Bucks County. Representatives from BCABVI's Low Vision Clinic, The Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22, PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Central Bucks YMCA and other service providers will be on site to share information with children and families.

For more information on Children's Services, please contact Meghan Sharman at [msharman@bucksblind.org](mailto:msharman@bucksblind.org).

### **Community Outreach**

BCABVI is offering community organizations the opportunity to conduct a club meeting at our facility free of charge. We will provide a speaker to explain BCABVI services and club members can tour our Newtown facility which includes a new Low Vision Clinic and Technology room.

To plan a meeting at our facility, please contact Sheryl Fitzgerald at [sfitzgerald@bucksblind.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@bucksblind.org)

### **Prevention of Blindness Services**

Did you know that BCABVI screens over 2,300 preschool aged children every year to identify early signs of vision problems? Our trained staff is available to conduct free vision screenings for any preschool in Bucks County.

We are starting to schedule for the fall, so please contact Karen Kossar at [kkossar@bucksblind.org](mailto:kkossar@bucksblind.org) to make sure your preschool is included.

BCABVI is committed to being an active, vital part of our community. If you have other ideas about how we can help, we would love to hear from you. Please share your thoughts with us at [ahyer@bucksblind.org](mailto:ahyer@bucksblind.org), call us at 215-968-9400, contact us on Facebook or through our website [www.bucksblind.org](http://www.bucksblind.org).

Best Wishes,

*Anne Marie Hyer*, Executive Director

## Notes from the Social Work Corner



### Working Together to Create New Opportunities



Part of living a rich, vibrant and independent life is to explore interests and hobbies. When the members of our Women's Group expressed an interest in gardening, BCABVI staff pulled together to make it happen!

We are pleased to announce that our new gardening project is well underway. Karen Eleuteri, Client Services Coordinator, and Ellen Dzwonar, Social Worker, worked with Frank Kruty, Driver/Client Aide to coordinate the construction of our new raised garden bed. Thanks to Frank's planning and construction talents, we now have a sturdy 3 x16 ft. planter located in the outdoor courtyard of BCABVI. Frank designed the garden bed to be accessible for clients with limited mobility to insure everyone could participate in the planting process.

In support of our project, Rebecca Fleming of Shady Brook Farm generously donated 36 vegetable plants to be planted just in time for this growing season.

Members of the Women's Group will be planting and tending the garden when they come to the center for programs throughout the month expectantly waiting for the fresh produce. "What a wonderful opportunity to enjoy being outdoors during the warmer weather and to enjoy the fresh vegetables", expresses BCABVI Women's Group member, Wanda Comfort.

This gardening project represents a collaborative effort of our clients, staff and community resulting in new opportunities here at BCABVI. It promises to be an engaging and worthwhile experience for all who participate. Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen!



### From the Lion's Den

In June, BCABVI Lions Club budgets for our annual charitable distribution. As so many of you have contributed to our fundraisers, we would like to say again how much your support is appreciated by the Lions and also by the following organizations:

Beacon Lodge, Bookin for Lookin (run for sight)  
Bucks County Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Delaware Valley Eye Bank, Diabetes Awareness, Leader Dogs,  
NJ CURE Eyeglasses, Special Olympics, St. Lucy Day School

We recognize these groups for the essential services they provide to the community and wish them continued success with their dedicated efforts.

Congratulations to newly elected club officers:  
Carole Milligan, President, Ginny Rapino, Vice-President

Over the Summer, BCABVI Lions Club will be planning for two major events. Along with the agency, we will host the

**Volunteer Breakfast on Wednesday September 7th, 2016.**

Our annual **Walk for Sight** will be held the following week on Wednesday **September 14th, 2016**

### 2016 Produce Vouchers Are Here

Every year, BCABVI partners with The PA Department of Agriculture and the Bucks County Area Agency on Aging to offer Farmer's Market Produce Vouchers to low income seniors. Eligible seniors receive \$20 worth of vouchers to purchase fresh produce grown by PA farmers.

#### **Eligibility Guidelines are:**

- 1) You must be a resident of Bucks County
- 2) Be at least 60 years of age
- 3) Have an annual income of not more than \$21,978 for one person or \$29,637 for a couple
- 4) You may not reside in a facility where meals are served

Anyone who meets the above eligibility requirements may pick up their produce vouchers at BCABVI Mon- Fri between 8 am- 4pm. Please bring a valid form of identification with you (ie. driver's license, photo ID verifying age). Any questions, please give us a call at 215-968-9400.

### Sign Ups

#### **Wednesday July 13, 2016 *Men's Breakfast***

Get together with the guys at a local diner to have coffee and hang out. Discuss whatever you want - it's your group!

**Cost: Bring money to cover the cost of your breakfast and a tip**

#### **Tuesday July 19, 2016 *River Lady Historical Lunch Cruise***

This 2 1/2 hour narrated cruise down Toms River and Barnegat Bay includes a full sit down lunch. Cash Bar is available.

**Cost: \$50 includes lunch and transportation from BCABVI to Toms River. Note: This trip is full - only waiting list names are being accepted**

#### **Wednesday July 20, 2016 *Voting Workshop***

Elections are coming - are you ready to vote? Learn about approved voting options and accessible voting machines. The Bucks County Election Coordinator and Voting Machine Supervisor will be available to answer any questions.

**Cost: There is no cost for this program**

#### **Wednesday July 20, 2016 *Volunteer Training for Thrift Shop #3***

This is the third training of the series in preparation for clients volunteering in our Second Look Newtown Thrift Shop. Focuses on Thrift Shop operations and customer service.

**Cost: There is no cost for this training**

#### **Wednesday August 10, 2016 *1Touch Self Defense Workshop***

Learn self-defense techniques are fully accessible and designed for practicality. There is no age limit, no physical strength needed or prior martial arts background necessary. 1Touch™ addresses each person's perception of their blindness and the otherwise unchallenged insecurities built upon that perception.

**Cost: There is no cost for this program**

#### **Wednesday August 17, 2016 *Summer Picnic***

Join us for our Annual Cookout and games as we celebrate the summer weather with friends! Prizes available for winners.

**Cost: \$15**

**Center Closings Monday July 4, 2016 - office closed**

### Client of the Month

Congratulations to *Dolly Cohen*, our **May 2016**

Client of the Month! Sheila Voltz, another BCABVI client, nominated Dolly for her extraordinary efforts coordinating a Bingo fundraiser at Centennial Station in Warminster, PA. Dolly and her team of volunteers solicited donations, wrapped door prizes, made 30 raffle baskets and sold tickets to over 200 attendees.

Dolly's Bingo event was the most successful fundraiser ever held at Centennial Station, resulting in an incredible donation to BCABVI of \$5,800.

This is the first time we have had a repeat winner in Client of the Month. If anyone deserves to win twice, it is Dolly. She has been part of the BCABVI family for over 17 years and we are hoping she is with us for 17 more. Congratulations and Thank You!



### **June 2016**

*Dennis Savini* has been selected as June 2016  
Client of the Month!

Dennis is involved with numerous activities both at the BCABVI facility and in the community. He openly shares his knowledge in the Adjustment to Blindness and Low Vision groups to help support others with similar experiences and is a strong team player in Trivia.



Where Dennis really shines is during community outreach and educational presentations in Bucks County schools. He uses his sense of humor to connect with kids, making them feel comfortable to ask him any questions about blindness and visual impairments. One of Dennis's main messages in his outreach to the kids is to show empathy when meeting someone with a disability, but not to feel sorry for the person. Many kids have never had the opportunity to interact with a person who is blind and Dennis is a positive example of someone who does not let vision loss define him. Congratulations and thank you to Dennis!

If you know of a client who embodies BCABVI's mission and uses their skills to support others and enhance our community, please submit your nomination to Sheryl Fitzgerald at [sfitzgerald@bucksblind.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@bucksblind.org). They could be our next client of the month!

### Resources for Assisted Travel

Do you like to travel but feel that, due to visual impairment, independent travel is no longer an option? Travel resources that specialize in accommodating persons who are blind or visually impaired may be the answer to planning your next vacation.

Traveleyes, founded in 2004 by the blind entrepreneur, Amar Latif, is the world's first commercial tour operator providing independent travel for people who are blind or visually impaired. Traveleyes has a fully accessible website and audio brochure, making it simple to choose and book a vacation. Sighted travelers booking the same vacations make each destination more accessible with their guidance and narrative descriptions of the sights for visually impaired travelers. Each vacation is expertly planned to appeal to all five senses, promising a unique travel experience.

Vacation groups consist of approximately 14 people with half of the group being visually impaired, and the other half of the group being sighted. Each day of the trip, a blind traveler is paired with a different sighted traveler to foster bonding among the group of travelers. Daily excursions and dining are enjoyed together with additional time to socialize and relax. Vacation destinations through Traveleyes include Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas. For more information on Traveleyes, please visit their website at:

[www.traveleyes-international.com](http://www.traveleyes-international.com).

Mind's Eye Travel is an organization that creates tours with Viking River Cruises for people who are blind or visually impaired. Offering a comfortable mix of activity and relaxation, programs for the cruises are planned on three decks, which are easily reached with well-marked staircases, or an elevator.

Mind's Eye Travel shore excursions are well planned and hosted by professional local guides providing good access and mobility with Viking owning many of the docks and luxury coaches which transport their vacationers. Shore excursions are included in the overall price, and discounted rates are available when travelling with a fully sighted person.

Viking now cruises throughout Europe and Asia, with North America on the horizon. For more information on Mind's Eye Travel and the Viking River Cruises, please visit their website at [www.mindseyetravel.com](http://www.mindseyetravel.com).

(Article information adapted from the websites of Traveleyes and Mind's Eye Travel)

**Resources highlighted in this article are for informational purposes only and are not endorsed by BCABVI. Please research all available options prior to booking travel.**