

Message from the Executive Director

The start of each new year presents opportunities to explore new ideas and projects here at BCABVI. We are excited for 2017 and want to share a few of the things we are working on across the agency for the start of the upcoming year.

Several of our clients expressed an interest in gardening last year, so we created a small raised bed garden where they successfully grew vegetables and flowers. They learned to use their other senses and low vision aids to care for the plants while thoroughly enjoying the outdoors. Many other clients asked to become involved in the garden, but its small size limited our ability to accommodate their request.

We were determined to offer everyone access to the proven benefits of gardening and encourage healthy habits aligned with our vision of rich, vibrant and independent lives, so we developed the concept of a sensory garden including raised herb beds and an accessible walking path intertwined between the beds.

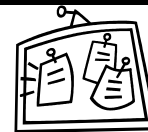
In partnership with the Penn State Extension Master Gardeners, we are in the process of identifying the layout and components of our accessible garden to be located on 3/4 acre of our property in Newtown, PA. Once this plan is complete, we will explore funding opportunities, additional partners and skilled volunteers who can assist with the creation of what we hope will be a community resource that can be enjoyed by everyone. We are optimistic that the garden will be available for use by late summer 2017.

In our low vision clinic, our doctors have been providing a superior service to patients experiencing vision loss. To further support independence in daily living, we have plans to add Occupational Therapy (OT) / Vision Rehabilitation Therapy as a new service available to patients. With the further expansion of our clinic's offerings, we renew our commitment to providing best practices in low vision to our community.

Children's Services was a focus in 2016 and we are seeing the fruits of our labor in 2017. The kick off meeting of Kids Unlimited, our social and recreational club created for Bucks County kids is scheduled for January 11, 2017. At our first meeting we are making the club's schedule for the year including trips and activities driven by our members' interests. Thanks to Claude Giroux and the Flyers, Kids Unlimited members are going to be part of Giroux's Crew on Saturday February 11, 2017. They will enjoy a Flyers game from the comfort of a private box with complimentary refreshments.

These are a few highlights of what is on the horizon at BCABVI for 2017. All our success comes from collaborating with our clients and community, so if an area sparks your interest please reach out to me at ahyer@bucksblind.org. We would love to have you be a part of our team! *Anne Marie*

Notes from the Social Work Corner



Don't Get Frustrated - Get Help!

The capabilities and accessibility of iPhones and iPads are amazing. As more people learned about what they can do, our TECH group has grown significantly. We created levels of group trainings, offered individual classes and even facilitated community based TECH clubs to maximize learning.

But what about the people who don't want to use smartphones and tablets? We heard from several clients who wanted to learn other ways to be connected and we agreed.

We are happy to announce that in addition to the instruction offered for iPhone and iPad, we will now provide individual training for Braille, and the use of Zoom Text screen magnification software for computers .

The Braille class will give clients the opportunity to explore this form of written language at your own pace. (New Unified English Braille System)

The Zoom Text instruction starts with the installation of the software, basic use of magnification and text to speech capabilities and advanced features for those who want to fully utilize all the functions available.

All classes are taught by client mentors with personal experience and technical expertise using the various options. They have done it themselves, so they understand the potential frustrations and have a unique perspective to offer guidance, feedback and support.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities to build your skills, contact Sheryl Fitzgerald at 215-968-9400 . She will match you with the right client mentor for your needs and schedule your first lesson.

All one on one instruction classes will be scheduled on availability of mentor and BCABVI's transportation. If you use our transportation services , the appropriate copay for will be required.

If you have any questions or concerns please see Sheryl or Ellen.



From the Lion's Den

Annual Basket Raffle to Begin January 4, 2017

Look for many of your favorite themes, including two money baskets worth \$100 each, a night at the movies, a basket loaded with gift cards, and new this year a crock pot with fixings.

Tickets are \$1 each or 8 for \$5.

They can be purchased from any Lions Club member or at the front desk. Drawing to be held April 5, 2017

10th Year Charter Anniversary



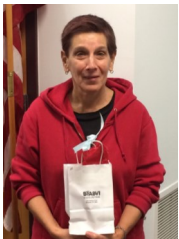
On February 1, 2017 the BCABVI Lions will mark our 10th year as a chartered Lions Club with a luncheon. Invitations were sent to many who have supported us along the way. Founders Frank Kolanko and Elaine Welch will be honored, as well as original members.

Center Closings

Monday January 16, 2017 - Office Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday February 20, 2017 - Office Closed President's Day

Client of the Month

Congratulations to Lottie Wadja, October 2016 Client of the Month! Lottie was nominated by Ginny Rapino who recognizes Lottie's work mentoring new clients, helping others at every turn, leading the way with the BCABVI Lions Club and advocating for BCABVI in the community. With her actions, Lottie inspires us all to get involved and make a difference. Thank you Lottie!



Congratulations to our final two Clients of the Month for 2016! Deb Berlin (November) and Sonny Pellowitz (December) were nominated by Meghan Sharman, Children's Services Coordinator for their enthusiasm and professionalism while helping to raise money for our new kids club. Deb and Sonny volunteered their time outside of the agency (in the cold) to sell tickets for our Basket Raffle. Thanks largely to their efforts, we raised over \$2,700 of start up funds for Kids Unlimited.



Sign Ups

Wednesday January 11, 2017 *Explore With Me*

This is the introductory meeting of our newest program where clients present their interests and hobbies to a group of peers and share how they overcome obstacles to pursue their passions!

Cost: There is no cost for this program

Wednesday January 18, 2017 *Pizza and a Movie*

Miracles from Heaven is a story about a young girl with a rare, incurable disease. After an accident, a miracle unfolds that leaves doctors mystified and her family restored. **Cost: \$15**

Wednesday February 8, 2017 *Explore With Me*

Step outside your comfort zone and explore new ideas! Group members will participate in the first of a series of presentations on hobbies and interests facilitated by their peers.

Cost: There is no cost for this program, but you must contact your social worker to become an active group member

Wednesday February 15, 2017 *Winter Social*

The holidays may be over, but we are still celebrating at BCABVI! Come to our winter social - spend time with friends and enjoy some great food and music. **Cost: \$15**

What's New at Second Look Newtown Thrift Shop

Want to be the first to know about events? Second Look Newtown Thrift Shop is now on Facebook and we will be posting upcoming specialty events on our page. Look for events in January featuring Vera Bradley and high end Denim (some pants valued at \$200).

February 13 - 18, 2017 starts our half price sale on everything in the store* in preparation for a complete turn over in merchandise. Everything is \$1 on Monday Feb 20th and after we close for restocking Feb 21 & 22, we will reopen with all new merchandise on Thursday February 23, 2017.

Keep up with monthly auction items, Friday night sales and other exciting ways to learn about the treasures in our store. You won't want to miss anything, so follow us on facebook!

*excludes high end boutique items

