



# INSIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**LACKAWANNA BLIND ASSOCIATION**  
"SERVING THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED"



## Spotlight on The Importance of Routine Eye Exams

"My eyes are fine! I don't need glasses!" "My prescription hasn't changed!" These are common excuses we hear from those who think that routine eye exams are strictly for the purpose of determining whether or not they need glasses. While this is one reason for an eye exam, it is certainly not the only reason. One of the best things you can do for your eyes is to protect them and the best way to start is to get regular eye exams. It is during the exams when potential issues can be discovered and then treated.

The American Optometric Association recommends that adults between the ages of 18 to 60 have a comprehensive eye exam every two years. Adults over 60 should have annual eye exams. A comprehensive eye exam evaluates eye muscle movement, visual acuity (how clearly you see), peripheral vision, refractive error (how well light waves pass through the cornea and lens of the eye), the health of the retina, and risk of glaucoma. Also, during the exam, health problems not related to your eyes may be diagnosed such as diabetes, high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases, and cancer.

"At risk" adults who have a family history of eye diseases such as glaucoma or macular degeneration should be tested more frequently. Also having diabetes, high blood pressure, taking medications with eye-related side effects, engaging in work that exposes the eyes to potential hazards, or having previous eye injuries or eye surgery would warrant more frequent eye exams for the "at risk" individuals.

The bottom line is to take care of your eyes and get them tested regularly so your vision lasts as long as you do!

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The mission of the Lackawanna Blind Association is to support and promote the interests of the blind and visually impaired, and the prevention of avoidable blindness.

### CONTACT US:

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# 90TH ANNUAL HELEN KELLER DAY SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2019 - FIORELLI'S IN PECKVILLE

Helen Keller Day features many people in the spotlight, however you may not know there are many Friends of the Blind working behind the scenes year round. The Friends of the Blind are a group of women and men who commit annually to support the agency and our mission. Funds raised by the Friends of the Blind pay for annual special outings for the clients and support all our programs. The Friends of the Blind assist with Helen Keller Day in so many ways — selling tickets, raffles, basket donations, staffing booths, and much more. Thank you, dear Friends! Helen Keller Day wouldn't be possible without you!

**Would you like to join the Friends of the Blind?** Just contact us at the Agency and we will help you get started!

The fashion show features Small Fryes Children's Boutique, Ann Taylor Loft, and Pierre's. The Lackawanna Blind Association thanks the fashion show participants and all of our volunteers and sponsors for their continuing support in making this a successful event. Special thanks to this year's Helen Keller Day Chair, Michele Albright.

**Please mark your calendar and attend this entertaining event!**

**Sunday, March 31, 2019**

**Fiorelli's, 1501 Main Street, Peckville, PA 18452**

Doors open 11:30a.m.; Lunch at Noon; Fashion Show 1:30p.m.

Individual tickets are \$35.00; \$15.00 for children under 10

Tables of 8 or 10 can be reserved for \$280.00 or \$350.00

Deadline for ticket purchase is **March 22<sup>nd</sup>**!

**Please note: Reservations are required!**

**NO TICKETS CAN BE SOLD AT THE DOOR!**

**Please call (570) 342-7613 for more information or to make reservations**



The monthly meeting of the Helen Keller Day committee members for 2019: Seated from left to right: ; Mary Lou Wascavich, Executive Director; Michele Albright; Cathy Van Nort. Standing from left to right: Janet May, Louise Passarella, Mary Louise Morgan, Mary Ann Wilcha, Julie Smith, and Mary Claire Boylan.

## PARTNERSHIP LEVELS FOR HELEN KELLER DAY

Please help us continue our programs and services to the blind and visually impaired in Lackawanna County by supporting Helen Keller Day 2019:

**\$5000 Platinum Visionary Partner**

**\$2500 Major Visionary Partner**

**\$1000 Visionary Partner**

**\$100 Seer Partner**

**\$500 Luminary Partner**

**\$50 Guiding Light Partner**

**\$250 Sight Saver Partner**

**\$25 Eye Safety Partner**

Please use the enclosed envelope if you wish to send in a gift. Your name or business will be listed in the Helen Keller Day program book, unless you choose to remain anonymous. Any donation is greatly appreciated!

## YOU GIVE LIGHT TO YOUR NEIGHBORS

The Lackawanna Blind Association is my opportunity to be around others with the same struggles as me. I am always learning from them and sharing with them. This socialization is something I look forward to.

~ Christina  
Stolze,  
Dunmore



The Lackawanna Blind Association makes me feel comfortable around others. I enjoy time with my peers at Sensory Development.

~ Perry Brunori,  
Scranton

I am assisted by my caseworker with tasks that I could not perform on my own and for this I am very appreciative.

~ Lucy Hein, Scranton



## THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING A GIFT!

Lackawanna Blind Association does not share donor information with anyone, other than publishing a list thanking donors by name only. Donors may also request that their gift remain entirely anonymous.

## Volunteer Profile: Friends of the Blind



The Friends of the Blind, formerly known as the Ladies' Auxiliary, has for nine decades faithfully served the agency in many ways, including hosting the very first Helen Keller Day. In 2010, the Ladies' Auxiliary was renamed the Friends of the Blind.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to one of the faithful members of the Friends of the Blind, **Louise Passarella** (pictured at left). Approximately 25 years ago, Louise saw a brochure for our Agency and was impressed by the Radio Reading program. She pursued her interest and became a volunteer with the reading program. A short time later, she decided to attend a Friends of the Blind meeting. On her way to the meeting, Louise popped in to Scanlon's Restaurant for lunch. While waiting for a table she struck up a conversation with a woman in line. That person was Olga Solfanelli, already a Friend of the Blind member. Louise and Olga walked to the meeting together, became good friends, and both volunteered for many, many years. As a member of FOTB, Louise enjoyed meeting "so many hard workers who all had a goal in mind and got the job done!" Louise said over the years she "just did what was needed." She volunteered as the corresponding secretary at meetings for many years. Louise feels it is "very fulfilling to volunteer" and has even brought her daughter, Cathy Van Nort, into the Friends of the Blind, wanting to "Hand it down to the next generation." Louise says "Once you have found your niche, it is very rewarding to share it with others by volunteering!"



Louise embodies the heart of the Friends of the Blind. Though you may never meet one of the members of the Friends of the Blind on the street or notice them on social media, you can bet we could not be successful without them! The lives of our blind and visually impaired clients are abundantly enhanced thanks to the Friends of the Blind members such as Louise! To all our Friends of the Blind, thank you, thank you, thank you!

*"There is no better way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark."*  
— **Helen Keller**

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**THANK YOU** to these outstanding members of our community for their dedicated support of our agency and the needs of the blind and visually impaired. We truly appreciate your faithful generosity in organizing annual fundraising events on our behalf!



### Pasta Fiesta

The annual Pasta Fiesta, hosted by Mary Regina Perry and Bob Harrington, was held on November 13, 2018 at Wood Grille, Bundy Street in Scranton. The annual event raised \$4,050 for our Agency. From left are Hosts Bob and Mary Regina, Jessica Perry, and LBA Executive Director, Mary Lou Wascavich.

## Scranton Lions' Dream Game

Scranton Lions Club members present a check to Mary Lou Wascavich, LBA Exec. Dir., for \$17,000, the proceeds of the 83rd Annual Dream Game held on July 18, 2018. First row, from left: President Karl Pfeifferberger, Dan Loftus, Mary Lou Wascavich, Mary Claire Boylan, Joe Manley and John Mesko. Second row: Allan Hetkowski, Dave Rudis, and Bill Dempsey.



## Cocktails for a Cause

Dr. Rebecca Schoonover (below, right) presents her 2018 CFAC donation in memory of Thom Mann, a friend and eye care professional, to Mary Lou Wascavich, LBA Executive Director, in the amount of \$2,040. The 13th annual Cocktails for a Cause was held at Backyard Ale House in downtown Scranton on November 17, 2018.





## Happy Fall!

Above and below, clients enjoy lunch at Fratelli's Pizza & Pasta House during our annual Fall Outing.



Perry Brunori & Renee Campbell are helped during Sensory Development Class by two University of Scranton students.



## Client Activities

### WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

Established in the U.S. in October 1964, White Cane Safety Day reminds us of the need of the blind and visually impaired to be able to move about the world, and the "wish and will to be free; the unquenchable spirit and the inextinguishable determination to be independent." (Maurer, 2018). The White Cane allows the progression of freedom and independence to continue in their lives.

Pictured at right, the LBA outreach table at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center on White Cane Safety Day 2018. Executive Director Mary Lou Wascavich and Case Work Coordinator Mary Claire Boylan staffed the table.



Maurer, M. (2018) *White Cane Safety Day: A Symbol of Independence*. Retrieved from <https://nfb.org/white-cane-safety-day>

## BY THE NUMBERS

Are you curious about how donations and funding procured by the Lackawanna Blind Association are used? Here is a breakdown of where those dollars were spent during the **2017/2018 fiscal year**:

### LACKAWANNA COUNTY

**258** individuals received **2021** sessions of independent living services in their homes or in a community setting to maintain or improve their activities of daily living

**26** individuals participated in **146** sessions of Support Groups

**1352** hours of service were logged by **20** volunteers for the Pell Radio Reading Services as broadcast on WUSR-FM 99.5 FM, Monday through Friday, 8 am - 10 am

**21** clients shared and learned in **11** Book Club meetings and enjoyed **12** descriptive movies together

**962** children at **31** sites were educated about eye care and safety

**2520** 3rd-grade students at **98** sites participated in the Magic World of Vision Eye Safety Education Program

### SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

**26** clients received **60** hours of support services including home visits and assistance with such tasks as paying bills and handling correspondence

**9** clients received a total of **77.5** hours of Transportation and Escort Services to Medical Appointments and Grocery/ Personal Needs Shopping

**325** children at **10** sites were screened for vision problems and **35** children were referred for follow-up care

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

- \* Have an extra hour or so that you would like to spend in the company of grateful individuals?
- \* Been meaning to “give back” in 2019 as part of your New Year’s Resolutions?
- \* Hoping to set a good example by volunteering your time and/or skills?
- \* Want to make a difference in the world today?

Consider becoming a Friend of the Blind and volunteering with LBA in the near future. You just might be surprised how much you enjoy it!

**VOLUNTEERING is COOL!!**

**TO NOTIFY US OF A CHANGE OF ADDRESS,  
OR IF YOU WISH TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR  
MAILING LIST, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE  
AND PRESS 5 TO LEAVE A MESSAGE.**

## To Our Clients, Volunteers, and Supporters:

2018 was another very positive year for the Lackawanna Blind Association! Our focus on the prevention of blindness continued as we ventured to incorporate technology and digital devices into the lives of our clients by offering access and instruction for these devices.

Our Facebook page and website were consistently updated as new information became available. We endeavored to keep current on our latest agency news, posting new photos, and the current month’s activities calendar. Please be sure to like and follow us on Facebook and visit us often at [www.lackawannablind.org](http://www.lackawannablind.org).

In 2018 we provided support for over 258 blind and visually impaired clients, distributed large-print calendars and other assist devices, offered referral services for low-cost eyeglasses for hundreds more, along with the prevention of blindness screenings and education for thousands of adults and children. Through the incredible support of our dedicated volunteers, we accomplished much with our undersized budget and limited staff. Thank you, volunteers, from the bottom of our appreciative hearts! Most of all, we are grateful for the privilege of serving our extraordinary clients, whose courage and determination inspire us every day. Best wishes for a successful New Year!

Mary Lou Wascavich, Executive Director

United Way of  
Lackawanna and Wayne Counties



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