

# INSIGHT

SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER



LACKAWANNA  
BLIND  
ASSOCIATION

Assisting visually-impaired & blind individuals since 1912

*Serving the visually impaired and the blind in Lackawanna  
and Susquehanna counties since 1912*

## The Life-Changing Role of Guide Dogs

Guide dogs are more than companions, they are expertly trained partners who empower individuals who are blind or visually impaired to navigate the world with confidence and independence. These remarkable animals learn to safely guide their handlers through busy streets, around obstacles, and into new environments, all while responding to complex commands.

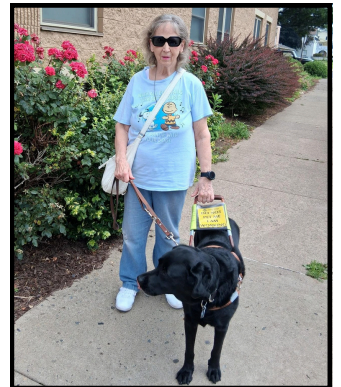
The bond between a guide dog and its handler is built on trust, communication, and mutual respect. This relationship not only enhances mobility but also provides emotional support, reduces isolation, and opens doors to greater social and professional opportunities.

While it may be tempting to pet or talk to a guide dog, it's important to remember that these dogs are working.

### Here are a few key tips for the public:

- Do not pet, feed, or distract a guide dog while it is in harness.
- Always speak to the handler, not the dog, if you want to offer assistance.
- Give them space—guide dogs need room to navigate safely.
- Respect their focus—interruptions can put both the dog and handler at risk.

Organizations that train and match guide dogs with individuals play a vital role in fostering independence and inclusion. At the Lackawanna Blind Association, we celebrate the impact of these incredible animals and the freedom they help bring to so many lives.



*Above: Trudy with "Edda". My Leader Dog is my lifeline. I love her! She keeps me safe in my travels.*

## A Special Visit from a Four-Legged Friend



Top: Melissa  
Right: Marlene

*Look at those  
smiles!!!*



The Lackawanna Blind Association welcomed a very special guest—a **certified therapy dog, Riley Ray** and her owner, **Diane Buckley**—who brought smiles, comfort, and a whole lot of tail wags to our clients and staff.

Therapy dogs are known for their calming presence and ability to lift spirits, and this visit was no exception. Our clients had the opportunity to interact with the dog, enjoy some gentle cuddles, and experience the unique emotional support that only a furry friend can provide.

Dear Friends,

We're thrilled to share some exciting updates that mark a new chapter for the Lackawanna Blind Association. First, we're proud to unveil our new website! Designed with accessibility and ease of use, the new site is your go-to destination for information on our services, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and more. It's a fresh, modern space that reflects our commitment to innovation and inclusion.

But that's just the beginning. Behind the scenes, we've been hard at work developing a comprehensive **Strategic Plan** that will guide our mission over the next three years— and one we're excited to bring to life with your support.

Lastly, in this issue, you'll also find updates on programs, activities and ways you can get involved in the meaningful work we do every day.

We invite you to explore, engage, and grow with us. Visit our new website and stay tuned — there is more to come!

*Mary Ann Iezzi, Executive Director*

## Our Services

- Client Support Services
- Life Enrichment Program
- Life Enrichment Program / Social Activities
- Visual Support Center / Access Technology
- Prevention of Blindness (Vision Screenings and educational program)
- Radio Reading Service (Monday thru Friday 8:00AM-10:00AM on WUSR / 99.5FM)

## Board Members

Paula DePeters, Judy Pronko, Ellen Rudis, Nicholas Parise, Robert Gebert, Jerry Musheno, R.Ph, Esq, Melissa Kirtley, Louise Frye, Jasu Acharya, Thomas Donohue, Dr. William Jordan, Jr., Patricia Thomas, Martin McKeel, Howard Spizer, Esq, Alexis Kelly, Gerard Champi, Elaine Blondek, Leigh Fennie, Kristen Hinds

# What's Been Happening



Ham Radio participants with volunteer instructors from the University of Scranton



Above: Scranton Tomorrow, in conjunction with Penn State Master Gardeners, assisting our clients in decorating our flower beds during our Sensory Program



It's a dance party with DJ Jim Cerminaro! We love when he visits!



**Other happenings:** Our Advocacy Group recently partnered with the Lackawanna Valley Heritage Trail to discuss the creation of a tactile trail at the Parker Street Walking Trail.

**Below left:** A visit with Individual Abilities in Motion (I AM) and the Bike Buddy Program.

**Below right:** Annual summer picnic at McDade Park.



For more information visit us at:  
[www.lackawannablind.org](http://www.lackawannablind.org)



# thank you

We are honored to acknowledge contributions that will help us continue our mission of serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. We were recently awarded funding from:

- The Margaret Briggs Foundation: a \$10,000 grant for operational support.
- Pictured: The Dalton Lions Club donated \$2,000, reinforcing their long-standing commitment to vision-related causes and community service.
- The United Way: \$33,000 for our Life Enrichment Program and Prevention of Blindness & Vision Screenings.
- All One Charities: \$7,995 to purchase a Spot Screener for our Prevention of Blindness -Vision Screenings.
- Walmart Spark Community Grant: \$250 for our summer picnic



We are deeply grateful for their support and belief in our work!

**CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MORE PICTURES AND UPDATES**

## Eyes on Fashion

96TH ANNUAL HELEN  
KELLER DAY LUNCHEON &  
FASHION SHOW



**Swing for Sight**  
**38<sup>th</sup> Annual "William J. Jordan, MD"**  
**Memorial Golf Tournament**



## Support Our Radio Reading Service

Help bring the written word to life for individuals who are blind or visually impaired by becoming a sponsor of our Radio Reading Service. In partnership with the University of Scranton, this service is offered Monday thru Friday from 8:00AM to 10:00AM on WUSR / 99.5FM.

Your support ensures access to events, local and national newspapers, magazines, and printed material that are read aloud daily by dedicated volunteers. Together, we can keep our community informed, connected, and empowered.

Interested in Underwriting our Radio Reading Service or any of our other programs?

Learn more about Sponsor Levels and on-air recognition by contacting us at 570-342-7613.



Support Programs

Sponsorships, raffle donations or other gifts are always welcome to support our mission. For more information call 570-342-7613 (x5)

**Lackawanna Blind Association**  
228 Adams Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18503-1602

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- Sensory Development
- Radio Reading Program
- Events / Fundraising
- Life Skills & Exercise
- ...And more

Consider volunteering this year and becoming a Friend of the Blind! Your gift of time can make a difference in someone's life!

## Contact Us

To request any changes to:

- Have the newsletter sent via email
- Be removed from the mailing list

**Please call 570-342-7613 (ext. 5) or  
email: [jmay@lackawannablind.org](mailto:jmay@lackawannablind.org).**

## Make a Lasting Difference

For most of our over 100 year history, the Lackawanna Blind Association has received bequests from people who support our good work.



These gifts continue to be the foundation for the many programs and services that inspire meaningful change in people's lives as they learn to cope with their visual impairment.

Contact us to learn about ways to help support those with vision loss through **Legacy Gifts** or by including the Lackawanna Blind Association in your will. For more information call 570-342-7613.



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.



The Lackawanna Blind Association is a Pennsylvania registered 501(c)(3) organization. FED ID# 24-0795466



United Way of  
Lackawanna, Wayne & Pike

