2019
ANNUAL REPORT
Laying the Groundwork for a New Decade
Providing a Lifetime of Services

We are delighted to bring Society for the Blind’s 2019 Annual Report to you. It was a busy – and somewhat noisy – year as we finished the build-out of the first floor. Thanks to your incredible support, we added nearly 5,000 square feet of multi-purpose space to our Midtown training center.

This annual report brings you highlights from 2019 as we expanded programs, upgraded technology and closed out our successful Vision 2020 campaign. To say that timing is everything could not be truer as we weather the coronavirus pandemic. Because we have our new Otto Annex, we are able to offer our Senior IMPACT Project retreats with ample space for social distancing while providing personalized instruction that helps older adults with vision loss stay independent.

On behalf of our staff and board, we thank you for your continued support of Society for the Blind and the people we serve. We are optimistic for the future and look forward to leading the way in serving people living with blindness and low vision in the Sacramento region.

Sincerely,

Janice Walth
Board President

Shari Roeseler
Executive Director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Revenue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$1,596,459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Vision Clinic Products &amp; Services</td>
<td>$258,403</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Fees</td>
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<td>Store</td>
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<td>Other Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
<td>$3,172,455</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Core Mission Support</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
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We are committed to the prudent use and stewardship of our resources so we can quickly respond to the needs of people living with vision loss. We are truly grateful for our community’s generosity that makes it possible for us to serve 27 counties in Northern California.
**MEET Alberto**

**When He Lost His Sight**
Born with cerebral palsy, Alberto was completely blind until surgery at 7 months old gave him back a small portion of his vision. By age 11, he loved computers and technology – by age 14, he knew he wanted a career in information technology.

**When He Found His New Vision**
Alberto joined our CareersPLUS program while attending American River College and then MTI College, where he earned his degree in network administration.

“Apple was the number one company I wanted to get into,” Alberto said. “My goal was to get a job for a big tech company. I applied to them about 25 times in the last year and a half.”

**How He is Living His Dreams Today**
After a year on the job market, Alberto attended our CareersPLUS workshop with Apple Elk Grove, where he learned important tips for his resume and how to answer Apple’s common interview questions. Four months later, Alberto was hired.

“Apple really cares about all of their employees,” Alberto said. “All of your peers and coworkers are like one giant family. Everyone wants to see you succeed. I’m confident that I’ll have a lot of opportunities down the road.”

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**2019 HIGHLIGHTS**

**Completion of the Carl R. Otto Annex**
In 2019, we finished the build-out of the first floor at Society for the Blind, adding nearly 5,000 square feet of training space, a new teaching kitchen for the Senior IMPACT Project and a dedicated space for the Music Support Group.

**Accessible STEM Workshops**
Our CareersPLUS Youth program added two STEM workshops in partnership with SES Robotics, where more than 25 youth with vision loss explored science, technology, engineering and math. Some 400 youth, parents and teachers participated in CareersPLUS in 2019.

**Access News**
After 20+ years of using an antiquated analog system, we completed a major upgrade of our Telephone Reading Service to increase accessibility. With more than 2,230 subscribers, Access News is now cloud-based with options to listen by phone, computer or tablet. More than 220 volunteer readers can record remotely day or night.

**Low Vision Clinic**
Because of the increase in the number of older adults experiencing vision loss, our Low Vision Clinic helped nearly 600 patients in 2019. Our Otto Annex now offers an indoor orientation and mobility course for our occupational therapists to teach adults with vision loss how to navigate public spaces and stores safely.

**Inaugural Briggs Award Event**
In October 2019, Society for the Blind presented the inaugural Briggs Award to Dr. Ronald Cole, a recently retired retinal surgeon in Sacramento who pioneered a visual field test and training to help people with vision loss use their remaining eyesight. The event was held at Mulvaney’s B&L and benefited our Low Vision Clinic.
**When She Lost Her Sight**
At 30 years old, Dawn was told she had high pressure in her eyes. Moving from New York to California to be with her ailing mother, she lost her precious mother and her beloved aunt within a year’s time. The pressure escalated. Both eyes tore.

**When She Found Her New Vision**
A successful realtor, Dawn managed to continue working and undergoing eye surgeries without telling anyone that she was losing her sight. When she made a significant financial error and no longer felt safe driving, she decided it was time for a career change and found Society for the Blind.

“It was a relief when I no longer had to pretend I could see,” she said. “And you can feel the love as soon as you walk into Society for the Blind.”

**How She is Living Her Dreams Today**
A longtime painter, Dawn thought her vision loss would mean never painting again until our Low Vision Clinic helped her acquire a lighted magnifying tool and lenses. Now she continues to paint as she focuses on building her mobility and technology skills.

“I’m determined to keep painting. My mind still sees color, and I’m thankful for my wonk-ish vision that helps me create my art.”

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**VISION 2020: LOOKING TOWARD TOMORROW**

We are grateful to the many people in our community who contributed to our Vision 2020 campaign to expand services for the more than 100,000 people with vision loss in the greater Sacramento region. The campaign raised $4.5 million to serve the growing number of seniors in need of services to stay independent, empower clients through education and training, create an endowment, expand the onsite Low Vision Clinic, upgrade technology and complete our Carl R. Otto Annex.

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**Thank You to Volunteers!**

We are beyond grateful for the 200+ volunteers that gave more than 14,000 hours of their time in 2019 as Access News and personal readers, Bingo assistants, SIP mentors, Core classroom assistants, event and administrative volunteers and more!

“Access News helps people to feel less isolated, and I love being a part of that. I appreciate all the work Society for the Blind does to bring the community together.”

~ Susan Portney, Access News Volunteer
When She Lost Her Sight
Stephanie was born legally blind but relied on light perception her whole life, including her 28-year career with the state. When she retired, her vision deteriorated rapidly and she needed new skills to navigate her world without vision.

When She Found Her New Vision
Stephanie joined our last Senior IMPACT Project retreat before the stay-at-home order was issued in March – just in time to meet her goal to safely walk around her neighborhood.

“It really came down to confidence as my vision diminished,” she said. “Many people who have lived with blindness their whole lives think there’s nothing left to learn, but that’s not true.”

How She is Living Her Dreams Today
During her first walk around her neighborhood after the retreat, she felt a burst of empowerment as she realized she felt safe crossing streets again. She’s now excited to have joined Society’s recently formed Black American Support Group.

“I want to see us talk to other Black seniors who are losing their vision but haven’t reached out for services yet because they don’t see anyone there who looks like them,” she said. “Sometimes people just need to see themselves in the group.”

Pivoting for a New Decade of Challenges
2019 laid the groundwork to face a new decade of challenges. But even a pandemic is no match for our nearly seven decades of experience adapting programs and services for people of all ages when they start losing their vision. Our instructors know firsthand how to pivot, and 2020 has been no exception as we successfully adapted our programs remotely.

- The number of teens in our CareersPLUS Zoom sessions has soared – online summer programming for kids with vision loss is in high demand. We are gearing up to offer academic tutoring and services as kids return to school.
- More working-age adults from rural and northern parts of the state are enrolling in our online blindness skills and assistive technology classes.
- We just resumed senior in-home training – requests are at an all-time high.
- The number of online support groups we offer for people of all ages continues to grow through requests from our community – from Spanish-speaking groups to our newly formed Black American Support Group.
More Ways You Can Help

**Become a Monthly Donor:**
*Join our Vision Forward Giving Circle*
When you give monthly, you become a member of our Vision Forward Giving Circle that ensures people losing their sight can create a new vision for their future.

**Make a One-Time Donation**
Give online at SocietyfortheBlind.org or use the enclosed envelope.

**Ask Your Employer to Match Your Gift**
Does your employer offer a matching gifts program? You can double your donation!

**Leave a Legacy of Vision in Your Community**
If you have included Society for the Blind in your estate plan or would like more information about doing so, please contact Lina Lloyd, Director of Development, at LLloyd@SocietyfortheBlind.org.

ENDURING PASSION FOR OTHERS THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

Mirella Hendren's dedication to people with vision loss spanned from Italy to the United States. Born and raised in Italy, she worked for the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted People (IUBPS) during WWII, providing blindness education to military members who lost their vision during the war. She met her husband, a U.S. Service Member, and after the war, they moved to the United States.

This year, we received a planned gift from Mirella’s estate. In her will, Mirella recounted her work at the IUBPS and how important it was to have a blindness rehabilitation center. She believed Society for the Blind reflected the kind of care and services she offered in Italy. Upon her death, Mirella left a good portion of her estate to IUBPS and Society for the Blind. Her generosity will live on for generations to come.

Thank You!

More than half of our fundraising comes from people like you in the community. As we begin a new decade, we are grateful to you for helping us empower the rising number of people with vision loss as we face new challenges.