Dear Friends,

We are delighted to present the 2021 Annual Report to you. It was quite a busy year as we reopened all our programs to in-person services, expanded our reach to serve the state of Nevada and reached an important goal for the agency with the creation of a board-designated endowment.

Society for the Blind's ability to serve a record 6,400 people impacted by vision loss in 2021 is due in no small part to the support of people like you. Your financial contributions and thousands of hours of volunteer support enable us to provide blindness skills training, low vision eye care and a host of supportive services.

We are excited for the future as we look to reach new horizons as we approach our 70th Anniversary in 2024. One key step toward that future was achieved with the establishment of the Dr. Paul and Alice Peterson Endowment. Proceeds from this fund will ensure the long-term stability of our organization and the ability to respond when new opportunities arise.

We hope you enjoy reading the 2021 Annual Report. We are as committed as ever to bringing compassionate and high-quality training and services to people living with low vision or blindness in the Sacramento region and beyond.

Thank you for being part of Society for the Blind's success this past year!

Sincerely,

Michelle Machado
Board President

Shari Roeseler
Executive Director
THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are thankful for our 100+ volunteers that gave more than 8,500 hours of their time in 2021. After shutting down for half of 2021, our Bingo program is now thriving thanks to these volunteers. When we successfully converted to a fully remote format for Access News, our volunteers continued to provide content. Our Board of Directors and program volunteers also helped tirelessly. Thank you!

MEET MAY

May remembers the last time she saw her baby’s face before losing her vision. Diabetic, May delivered Lara at just 7 months old. While Lara was in the NICU, May’s kidneys began failing. One day during dialysis, her blood pressure dropped, and she went blind.

“I remember thinking, what am I going to do? I have a baby,” May said. “The services I needed were nowhere to be found in Nevada, so I just sat in the corner of our bedroom.”

May knew she needed to learn blindness skills to be active in her daughter’s life. It took years to find, but eventually May joined a training program 400 miles away. When the state of Nevada began partnering with us, May joined our remote Assistive Technology classes so she could be near her now 8-year-old daughter and keep improving her skills.

“I’ve learned a lot and I’ve changed as a person,” May said. “I don’t need a pair of eyes to be a wife, mother or friend. I can be the person who I want to be and do what I want to do.”

For May's full story, visit: SocietyfortheBlind.org/meet-may/

MEET DOUG

A carpenter and lifelong athlete, Doug was in good health at age 67 when his left eye went blind overnight. He was diagnosed with optic neuropathy and has been losing vision in his right eye ever since.

“I was a wreck,” Doug said. “I became kind of a recluse where I didn’t even want to be around myself, let alone other people.”

Then his wife found Society for the Blind’s Senior IMPACT Project, where he thrived and has served as a mentor for several years. He built a perfect carport for a client and has rekindled his love of running. He credits the example set by our instructors.

“At Society for the Blind, all of the instructors are blind,” Doug said. “It’s not a bunch of people with vision sitting around telling blind people they can do better. They’ve walked the road. Going blind is not the end, it’s a beginning.”

For Doug's full story, visit: SocietyfortheBlind.org/meet-doug/
REACHING PEOPLE WITH VISION LOSS IN NEVADA

In January 2021, we began contracting with the State of Nevada to provide our blindness skills education and employment services to its residents in person and virtually. At the end of the year, our one-year contract was renewed for four years, and we now have a wait list. Over the coming years, we look forward to providing in-person services for Nevada residents in their home state and at our main training center in Sacramento.

PARTNERING WITH THE BLIND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN COLORADO

In early 2021, Society for the Blind joined forces with the Blind Institute of Technology™ in Colorado to create a new pathway for employment of people living with blindness or visual impairment. The Blind Institute of Technology works to employ professionals with vision loss in corporate America, placing them in positions on par with their education and skill level, through networking, education and workforce development. Working together, we will move the needle in a positive direction on the rate of employment for people with vision loss.

MAXIMIZING LOCAL SUPPORT: maximus FOUNDATION

Society for the Blind is honored to be a long-time partner with the Maximus Foundation, which has given more than $99,000 to our programs over the past 16 years.

Maximus partners with federal, state and local governments to provide communities with critical health and human service programs. The Maximus Foundation was created by the Maximus Board of Directors in 2000 to give back to the communities it serves.

“It’s been inspiring for us to see the growth and impact that our foundation has had as Society for the Blind continues to invest in its infrastructure and expand services,” said Benjamin Coss, Senior Vice President of Health Services at Maximus. “It has been personally rewarding to see the work that Society for the Blind is doing and the impact that it has on so many people. Society for the Blind represents the kind of effort we look to support in communities across the country.”

For the full story, visit: SocietyfortheBlind.org/maximus-foundation/

THANK YOU!
MEET PATRICIA

Patricia was born completely blind, but it never occurred to her to doubt her ability to do whatever she wanted to do. When she learned about our CareersPLUS program at age 14, she signed up immediately.

“When I heard about CareersPLUS, I was like, I’m going,” she said. “It’s such a comfortable environment and it honestly feels like a family. I feel like CareersPLUS is giving me the tools I need and making me stronger to reach my goals.”

Patricia, who turned 18 in August, is attending Sacramento State University this fall. She plans to major in political science and eventually use her degree to help immigrants.

“I’m so excited, and I’m so nervous,” she said. “I feel like my life is just starting. I really appreciate how much they’ve made possible for me at Society.”

For Patricia’s full story, visit: SocietyfortheBlind.org/meet-patricia/

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Serving More People
In 2021, Society for the Blind served 1,000 more people than in 2020 – an 18% increase in one year.

CareersPLUS Youth Expands
In 2021, we began serving kids across the state with our virtual classes and After-School Academy. New program coordinator, Brandie Kubel, helped our teens create a podcast.

Expanding to Nevada
In January, the State of Nevada asked us to begin providing our services for its residents, both virtually and in person. Our contract was just renewed for four years.

Monthly Family Support Group
In early fall, our quarterly virtual family support group became a monthly opportunity for family and friends of people with vision loss to share their experiences with each other.

Partnering with BIT
Early in the year, we began partnering with the Blind Institute of Technology™ in Colorado to help increase the employment rate of people with vision loss.

Sac Bee Readers Donate
In late fall, we were included in the Sacramento Bee’s Book of Dreams to support our Senior Safe At Home Kits so seniors have the tools to stay independent in their homes.
DR. MANNIS TO RECEIVE 2022 BRIGGS AWARD

We are honored to present Dr. Mark Mannis with the 2022 Briggs Award for Outstanding Contributions in the field of Ophthalmology. Dr. Mannis is the Fosse Endowed Chair in Vision Science Research, and Professor and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology & Vision Science at UC Davis Eye Center. He serves on our board of directors and is recognized nationally and internationally for his work in the field of corneal and external eye diseases.

MORE WAYS YOU CAN HELP

• Make a donation at SocietyfortheBlind.org or using the enclosed envelope.
• Give to our endowment (see enclosed flier).
• Name Society for the Blind as your AmazonSmile beneficiary.
• Leave a legacy of vision through a planned gift: Lina Lloyd, Director of Development, donate@societyfortheblind.org

Learn more at SocietyfortheBlind.org

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