

WHAT IS THE CHRYSALIS AWARD?

In keeping with our mission to help our clients “achieve their personal goals and restore their quality of life consistent with those goals,” we decided to develop an award which would honor the many accomplishments of blind or visually impaired individuals in all aspects of life that often go unnoticed. We chose the name Chrysalis Award because a caterpillar’s change in the cocoon, or chrysalis, to a beautiful butterfly represents the transformation of our lives that occurs when we work through our personal challenges. The Chrysalis Award Dinner will become our signature fundraising event where we will present our new award annually “to a blind or visually impaired person who has transformed the world around them.”

MEET

DR. AMY BOWER

Dr. Amy Bower will be the first Chrysalis Award recipient.

She is a Senior Scientist, Physical Oceanographer, at Wood’s Hole Oceanographic Institution, Massachusetts.

Growing up Amy had always loved the ocean, the beach and science and so decided to major in physics at Tufts University. She also began to think seriously about a career in physical oceanography, the study of waves, currents and the physical forces that make the currents move and change with time. Ultimately Amy obtained her PH.D. from the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography.



At age 24, however, while pursuing graduate studies, Amy noticed that her vision was blurry. Her eye doctor told her she had juvenile macular degeneration, a progressive disease without a cure which leads to blindness. Since this disease destroys the central portion of a person’s vision, it affects their ability to read, drive and recognize faces. Amy also suffered from retinitis pigmentosa which destroys the peripheral vision and she was left with just a thin ring of usable vision. The diagnosis left her feeling scared, sad and wondering if she could even continue the career which she loved. Soon Amy was not able to read the text in a paperback book and within two years she could not read the words on the computer screen.

After diagnosis, Amy turned to Boston low vision rehabilitation specialist Dr. Gerald Friedman for help. Dr. Friedman was challenged to find successful adaptive solutions which would allow Amy to go on board research vessels and use all kinds of equipment.

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Today, Dr. Bower leads scientific missions on sea currents and travels the world to places like the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa where she and her team studied the water coming out of the Red Sea. She reads data printouts and graphics mapping deep sea temperatures using large video magnifiers while powerful computer voice and magnification software allow her to use the computer.

Amy is also very much involved in her educational outreach activities with students at the Perkins School for the Blind. She has partnered with Kate Fraser, Perkins science teacher, to introduce blind and visually impaired students to oceanographic research.

The students visit her lab at Wood's Hole, participate in short educational cruises and are introduced to the adaptive technology she uses. In addition, Amy has developed the OceanInsight website so that Perkins students can keep up-to-date with her research.

We are looking forward to learning more about Dr. Bower's inspirational story and her accomplishments regardless of her visual impairment when we honor her in October.

Invitations will be mailed in late August. Sponsorship and advertizing opportunities are available now by contacting the Development Office at **610.433.6018, x. 241**.

OUR MISSION

To provide a comprehensive set of preventative, rehabilitative, support and social services enabling blind and visually impaired clients to achieve their personal goals and restore quality of life consistent with those goals. Programs will provide a balance of independent living skills and social services to meet individual needs across a diverse client base and also help reduce the incidence of vision loss in the community through prevention of blindness and remedial eye care services.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

I was honored to be chosen by the Board to serve as Executive Director for the Center for Vision Loss! Working with Stephanie Olexa was a wonderful experience and I know that we will continue on a positive path to promote and expand our services and make Center for Vision Loss one of the key service providers in the region.

Over the past six months, we have incorporated some new programs into our monthly schedule--many specifically requested by our clients. You can check out the results in our photo gallery on page 5! In fact, we just hosted a popular exercise and self defense program in May. The self defense techniques were so effective that now I'm afraid to walk into the gathering room! So...I'm making an even bigger effort to keep everyone happy!

As a part of our effort to continue to expand the content and quality of our programs, we are also pleased to welcome Rita Lang as Manager of Innovative Programs. Rita joined us in April and is anxious to bring her own fresh ideas and skills to the position.

I know many of you have a strong connection to the Center for Vision Loss. We thank you for staying connected with us and following our progress.



Douglas A. Yingling, Executive Director

AGENCY UPDATE

Agency Board of Directors Co-Presidents Robert Ricci and David Pike recently announced some changes to Center for Vision Loss designed to streamline the agency and allow us to focus our valuable resources on programs and services. Stephanie Olexa, who joined the staff in January, 2010, to lead the consolidation of the two original Lehigh Valley blind associations, left her position as Executive Director at the end of April. Stephanie guided the new agency through a successful transition and has now joined the Board of Directors, allowing her to continue to bring her unique skills to Center for Vision Loss. Doug Yingling, Director of Vision Services, was promoted to Executive Director, bringing more than 25 years of experience with serving people who are blind or visually impaired. His engaging style and skills make him uniquely qualified to lead the agency.

The Co-Presidents also stated that the *re-visions* Thrift Shop will close at the end of June, a necessary step in these challenging economic times. And the agency will work with local eye care professionals to cover those services once provided by our Eye Care Clinic in the Lehigh Valley. Ricci and Pike noted that the Board of Directors remains excited about the agency's future, our mission and our commitment to our clients.

BASKET BINGO & BRUNCH THANKS

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 5th annual Basket Bingo & Brunch fundraiser on April 10, 2011 a great success: participants; volunteers; raffle donors; Hotel Bethlehem staff; Carol Dotta, Longaberger representative; Brad Ott and Allyson Swett, Board member bingo callers; and sponsors: Inova Technologies, Lessig, HMK Insurance, Minuteman Press, Allentown Optical Corp., Historic Hotel Bethlehem, Bethlehem Teachers Federal Credit Union and Yocco's Inc. **Mark your calendar now for next year's event on Sunday, April 22, 2012.** You don't want to miss the fun!



VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

Volunteers are always needed to provide a helping hand and heart to the programs and services of the Center for Vision Loss. Contact Rita Lang, Manager of Innovative Programs, to discuss opportunities that range from escort driver, to general office help, to member of the Board of Directors or special committees. Rita can be reached at **610.433.6018, x. 231** or rita.lang@centerforvisionloss.org.



REMINDER!

It's not too late to sign up to walk for Center for Vision Loss in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community on **Saturday, June 11, 2011**, in historic downtown Bethlehem. Register on-line at www.walkforahealthycommunity.org. Remember that 100% of every dollar you raise for our agency goes directly to us. Center for Vision Loss is one of the 23 non-profit agencies taking part in this event supported by Highmark Blue Shield. It's fun and it will be more fabulous if YOU are there!

ACCESSIBLE THEATER COMES TO THE LEHIGH VALLEY

In the **VISION** Winter 2011 issue, we informed you of the Center for Vision Loss's participation in the newly-named Tri-County Accessible Arts Coalition, a group committed to bringing accessibility features such as audio and captioning equipment and sign language interpreters to the arts in Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties. On July 17, 2011, the 2:00 pm production of *Godspell* at the Baker Theatre, Trexler Pavilion of Theatre and Dance, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, will be the Valley's first performance of accessible theater. Tickets cost \$10.00 per person with a \$10 ticket also available for one companion. At 12:30 pm there will be a tour and reception for patrons utilizing the services and their friends. The number of headsets for the audio description is limited, so if you plan to attend, make your reservations early by calling Jess at Muhlenberg College at **484.664.3087** or e-mail boxoffice@muhlenberg.edu.

RAFFLE UPDATE

Tickets for the 2011-2012 Raffle are still available at \$10 each or six for \$50. If you want to purchase tickets, contact Stephanie Houck at **610.433.6018, x. 244**. The first drawing takes place on July 1, 2011 and then continues monthly until June 30, 2012, so there are plenty of chances to win! All proceeds from this fundraiser support the agency's programs and services.

List of Winners:

January, 2011: Ruth Savage, Veronica Holben, Betty Winters, Robert Buss, Rick Kilpatrick, Ann Rahn

February, 2011: Adam Wummer, Rudolph Gestl, Bob Kern, Rosanne Zgura, Gloria Latour, Harvey Cheng, M.D.

March, 2011: Nancy Prostko, Michael A. Bushner, RoseMarie Bley, Jerald Srodes, Ana Morganello, Alvin Herman

April, 2011: Kim Dalessandro, Elaine Golden, Sharon Glenn, Carol Akam, Carole Sullivan, Angie Railing

May, 2011: W. Jag Mills, Carol Jean Lehr, John Mahley, Daisy Iasiello, Keith, Patty and Devon Laudenschach, Jean Schlicked

SPOTLIGHT ON CLIENT ACTIVITIES



On March 8, Sandy Gallagher, Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services Rehabilitation Teacher, shared makeup and personal grooming techniques for ladies only.

On May 6, Dianna Wetling, Lehigh Valley Health Network exercise physiologist, and Jenna Metzger, Mental Health Counselor, led sessions on physical fitness and self-defense.



On February 16, Student client A.J. and his sister sang a karaoke duet at Talent Night sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Saturday AM Lions Club.



On April 20, Cooking Class participants prepared delicious turkey meatballs under the direction of Doug Yingling, head chef and Executive Director.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

On May 19, 2011, the Center for Vision Loss hosted the program “Emergency Preparedness for People With Special Needs” at our Monroe County Office. Made possible by the “Broadband Outreach Project” grant from the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, the half-day session emphasized that while all of us need to recognize the importance of proper planning for disasters, it is essential that people with disabilities be prepared for emergency situations.

The grant established a partnership with the local Red Cross. Gail Toscano, Disaster Services Program Coordinator from the American Red Cross of the Poconos, and three Red Cross volunteers taught the group key facts about:

- Creating a personal support network
- Completing a personal assessment of what your individual needs would be during a disaster
- Making a plan for you and your family
- Creating a disaster supply kit of essential items in the event of an evacuation
- How service animals and pets are handled during disasters

Following the Red Cross program, Doug Yingling, Center for Vision Loss Executive Director, talked about broadband technology and how it relates to the concerns and communication needs of those who are visually impaired. Then everyone completed a survey of their broadband use, which is part of the grant project.

Anyone can take the survey. For each person who does, Center for Vision Loss gets a \$2 donation! It takes only two minutes. Go to www.pablind.org. Click on the box “Take the PA Broadband Initiative Survey.” Make sure to select “local blind agency” for the last question! Pass this on to your e-mail networks and thanks!

For more information about disaster preparedness go to www.redcrosslv.org or www.redcrossmonroepa.org.

KUDOS TO DAVID PIKE!

On March 22, 2011, David Pike, Board of Directors Co-President, received the 2011 “Turning the Curve-United Way” Award at the SUITS Fifth Annual Awards Event held at Daniels BMW to honor Lehigh Valley business professionals who demonstrate real horsepower in their service industry. The agency nominated David, owner of three Minuteman Press locations in the Lehigh Valley, for his tireless efforts in providing consistent solid and intelligent leadership since 2005, especially in working through the recent consolidation process. We are so pleased that David has now been recognized by the United Way, the community and his peers for his efforts.

GIVING PAGE

The Center for Vision Loss is the region's only non-profit agency dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by vision loss. In 2009-2010, our programs and services touched the lives of 17,820 residents of Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe Counties. Help us continue our programs and services through a tax-deductible gift today. **Enclosed please find my gift in the amount of \$_____.**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST ____ Zip _____

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E-mail _____

Please check here if you give us permission to add your e-mail address to our electronic mailing list. We will never share your e-mail address with any other group.

This gift is a tribute **In Honor Of** **In Memory Of**

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Please notify the following person regarding this tribute gift:

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Security Code _____

HELPING TO ASSURE OUR AGENCY'S FUTURE

Friends and supporters of the Center for Vision Loss play an important role in ensuring the agency's future and financial health. A Bequest (Gift by Will) is one of the easiest gift options to choose. Bequests may be restricted or unrestricted. Contact your tax and/or legal advisor with respect to your personal circumstances and remember that everyone needs a will regardless of the amount of their assets.

**Please detach and
send with your contribution to:
Center for Vision Loss
845 West Wyoming St.
Allentown, PA 18103**

All gifts to Center for Vision Loss are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. "The official registration and financial information of the Center for Vision Loss may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement."

**Questions?
Contact the Development Office
at 610-433-6018, x. 241.**



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VISION EXPO

June 8, 2011
10 am - 2 pm

Holiday Inn Allentown Center City
904 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA

This FREE event is designed for people with vision loss and their families, employers, teachers, service providers and eye care professionals. Various exhibitors will demonstrate magnification and low vision products, give educational presentations, and provide information on free services. There will be door prizes and snacks and beverages, too. The event is presented by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services and the Center for Vision Loss. It is funded by a grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind and the Greater Wilkes-Barre Association for the Blind. **Call 610.433.6018 for more information.**

Please let us know if you would rather receive this newsletter electronically by calling **610.433.6018, x 241** or go to our website at **www.centerforvisionloss.org**. Also let us know if your mailing address has changed or if you wish to be removed from our list.

VISION is published three times a year by the Center for Vision Loss for our donors, volunteers and friends in the community.

Douglas A. Yingling
Executive Director

Karen Z. Huetter
Editor

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