

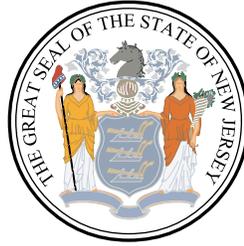
2017

State Rehabilitation Council

Annual Report



**New Jersey Department of Human Services
Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**



New Jersey Department of Human Services Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

2017 Annual Report - State Rehabilitation Council

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) promotes and provides services in the areas of education, employment, independence, and eye health for people who are blind, vision-impaired, or deaf-blind, their families, and the community.

The Commission adopts four major strategies in carrying out its mission, which are:

- (1) Providing specialized services to people with limited or no vision;
- (2) Educating and working in the community to reduce the incidence of vision loss;
- (3) Improving social attitudes about blindness and vision-impairment; and
- (4) Increasing employment outcomes for individuals who are blind, vision-impaired, and deaf-blind.

Detailed information about services can be found at: <http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>.

Any questions regarding this report, or to request it in alternate formats, should be directed to Amanda Gerson at 973-648-3660 or via e-mail at amanda.gerson@dhs.state.nj.us.



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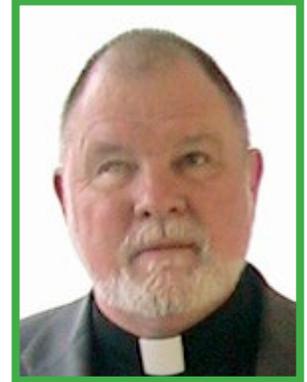
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State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) - Chairperson

Dear Governor Murphy:

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the State Rehabilitation Council of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired for 2017. I trust you will enjoy this slightly revised format which will help you and others focus on the reality of the lives of people served, and impacted by the work of, CBVI. The shortest line between the human heart and the truth is not usually statistics but stories.



2017 has been a full year for the SRC and the Commission. We have worked together vigorously. We have advised and collaborated with CBVI in a statewide evaluation process to identify unserved and/or underserved populations through the use of consumer surveys and the extensive review of newly adopted policies, occasioned by changes in Federal law and regulations. We have been supportive of the Commission's revising and re-tooling of its work in the field of Blindness Education and in more systemic renewal and revitalization. Also, in line with our stated goals for this year, our own sub-committee structures have been revitalized and are up and running.

I think I can say that I, and all the members of the Council, are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this important work in the service of the blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired citizens of New Jersey.

Respectfully,

The Rev. James W. Warnke, MA, MSW, LCSW
State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson

Executive Director's Report

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI or Commission) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are pleased to submit the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (FFY 2017). We welcome this opportunity to update you regarding our programs and achievements. This Annual Report is required under Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and represents the ongoing teamwork and collaborative effort of the Commission and the SRC. The SRC's support for, and contribution to, the planning and execution of Commission programs has resulted in innovative initiatives, yielding yet another productive year for CBVI's mission on behalf of blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired residents of New Jersey.



In the following pages you will see detailed the work of the Commission through a full array of programs, servicing the needs of consumers from childhood to seniors. While the Commission offers a wide menu of programs, catering to the needs of the full life span of blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired residents of New Jersey, we exist to support and promote two primary objectives: the provision of education and blindness skills training to qualified consumers, and the support of these same consumers to find integrated, competitive employment in society.

Each program that is described in this report contributes, in some fashion, to the accomplishment of these two primary objectives.

Unlike previous years, we are relying on the art of story-telling to illustrate the impact of our various programs and services. While program descriptions, facts, and figures can chronicle the effective work of our agency, we have concluded that spotlighting the performance of our agency through featured anecdotes, which give meaning to our facts and figures, will capture the creative spirit of our wide-ranging mission. Finally, since CBVI's support of a given consumer may occur over a number of years, the use of story-telling will make it clear that success is not realized only at the journey's end, but is achieved through the evolution of services provided to our consumers. Enjoy this new format for learning about CBVI and all of its offerings.

Respectfully submitted by,
Daniel B. Frye, J.D.
Executive Director

SRC Working Principles and Responsibilities

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It gives advice to, and works in partnership with, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency. The members of the State Rehabilitation Council are appointed by the Governor and convene at least five meetings a year. All meetings and public forums are announced, and are open and accessible to the general public. The meetings are held in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act, NJSA 10:4-6.

The Functions of the SRC

- ◆ Review, analyze, and advise CBVI regarding performance of its responsibilities of the Agency under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 2014;
- ◆ Assist CBVI with the development of State goals and priorities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation program;
- ◆ Advise and assist CBVI with the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required under the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 2014;
- ◆ Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, Vocational Rehabilitation services;
- ◆ Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and to make the report available to the public;
- ◆ Coordinate with other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC);
- ◆ Establish successful working relationships between CBVI, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and Centers for Independent Living within the State; and
- ◆ Perform other functions consistent with the purpose of this title, as the SRC determines to be appropriate.





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SRC Accomplishments in FFY 2017

The SRC met five times in FFY 2017. The sub-committees continued to develop resources for CBVI staff and consumers and conducted a review of current and pending policies. Consumer satisfaction research, especially concerning technology training offered by CBVI was a main feature of our work together. We believe that this revitalization of the sub-committee work to be a major accomplishment of this year, and that this accomplishment makes us a stronger body in the service of consumers.

The SRC worked hard to support the leadership team of the agency in the significant tasks involved in the review of



policies and procedures necessitated by the revisions in Federal law and Regulations. This work will continue in 2018.

The SRC gave support, encouragement, and provided insights in the initiatives taken in regard to the revitalization of the Blindness Education Department of CBVI.

SRC Goals for FFY 2018

The SRC will continue to meet five times in Federal Fiscal Year 2018 as well as continue ongoing sub-committee work between these meetings to foster the goals of the CBVI and its excellent services to the consumer population.

The SRC Chair will seek to work in more extensive collaboration with Commission administration and the SRC Chair of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Services to continue to develop protocols for the integration and education of new SRC members to their roles and responsibilities as well as the scope of the work of their respective agencies.

The members of the SRC will continue to participate, as appropriate, in public forums and agency programs for the benefit of consumers.



State Rehabilitation Council Subcommittees

Annual Report Subcommittee

Report Subcommittee is charged with putting together the annual State Rehabilitation Council report. Members of the subcommittee assist with the creation, recommendations, compilation, and editing of the report.

Business Relations Subcommittee

The SRC Business Relations Subcommittee was created to provide an additional layer of support to CBVI as it moved to prioritize businesses as “a secondary consumer”, which is a change to the traditional Vocational Rehabilitation model following the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Composed of SRC members with experience in the business sector, this Subcommittee has offered support, resources, and strategies to the newly established Business Relations Unit.

Evaluation Subcommittee

Continuing its goal from 2016, the Evaluation Subcommittee assisted CBVI with a consumer satisfaction survey of the current access technology training being provided to consumers. The subcommittee provided feedback and consultation on the development and implementation of the survey to the contracted university-based survey group and provided feedback and suggestions following receipt of the final report.

The subcommittee also assisted CBVI in activities necessary for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, including facilitating the Statewide Townhall Meeting in June 2017.

Policy Subcommittee

In 2017 the SRC sub-committee on policy reviewed a significant number of policies and policy proposals of CBVI. Because of the excellent work of the CBVI administrative team, few recommendations or revisions were required. Those that were made, however, seemed significant to us and also to staff as all were incorporated into the final drafts of the policy measures involved.

Resource Subcommittee:

The SRC members worked collaboratively in the creation and implementation of the new resource list to foster awareness of the various community resources available to individuals who are blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired. Independence and life enrichment resources have been increased through networking and information sharing. The resource list is a working document that has been revised and will continue to be updated as additional resources are attained.

Overview of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

In April of 1909, the New Jersey State Legislature directed that a state agency be established “to provide any and all means which shall be deemed feasible for ameliorating the condition of the blind.” Over 108 years later, the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), more than ever finds itself fulfilling that original mandate.

During that first year, Miss Hayes and another teacher, Janet Paterson, established the state’s first integrated classes for blind and sighted students within the Newark school system. These classes were based on the belief that integrated classes provided blind students with the educational tools and exposure necessary for a smooth assimilation into society.



The Commission was established as a state agency in 1910 under the direction of Lydia Young Hayes, a blind teacher of the blind. One of the initial tasks of the Commission was to compile a registry of the state’s blind residents. During that first year, 750 people were registered.

The formation of a single agency to administer to the needs of New Jersey’s blind population emerged from a wave of social consciousness that swept the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As a result of increased awareness, significant strides were made toward equalizing opportunities for people who were blind.

The integrative educational philosophy and policy was recognized throughout the country, as an innovative model in the field of education of the blind. From the early 1940’s to the late 1960’s, and under the supervision of Josephine Taylor, the Commission’s evolving educational programs, known as the New Jersey Plan, gained world-wide recognition. The educational initiative of supporting blind and vision-impaired students in public schools, and sending teachers to assist them through lessons in Braille, low-vision aids, and special classes, has grown over the years into an even more comprehensive educational service program that supported over 2000 students last year.



A Home Teaching Service Program was also installed during the first years of the Commission. Teachers went into consumers' homes to help them discover ways to efficiently use new techniques and their own talents to achieve self-sufficient lifestyles. This program offered instruction in communication skills such as Braille and typing, and included guidance in the production of marketable crafts and handiworks, which led to the creation of a Home Industries Program, that functioned as an agent for the sale of products made by blind persons.

In 1915, the Commission began a program to place blind workers in the work industry at large, capitalizing on employment opportunities resulting from World War I Armed Services recruitments. Federal and state legislation offered additional support to the Commission's early employment and social service programs, which were designed to provide legal and economic leverage to agencies that served people with disabilities.

Basic legislative mandates and their various amendments allowed the Commission to vastly enhance its services during the

middle period of its growth, under the direction of George Meyer (1936-1964). Major legislative amendments, such as the Barden LaFollete Act in 1943, and earlier federal rehabilitation legislation like the Smith-Fess Act of 1920, provided funds and authorized state agencies to help blind and vision-impaired people obtain meaningful employment through vocational training, counseling, physical restoration, and placement services.

The Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 authorized the Commission to license qualified blind people to operate vending stands in federal and federally-sponsored buildings, which was later broadened to include state, municipal and private buildings. There are presently 53 Commission-sponsored newsstands, snack bars, coffee shops, and full-service cafeterias in facilities throughout the state, with several more planned. Vocational Rehabilitation Services were formally organized in 1941 under the supervision of Carl Pirrups-Hvarre. Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided a wider range of training, placement, counseling and guidance to prepare blind people for



employment, and to further immerse them into the business arena.

From 1911 to 1918, the Commission, concerned citizens, and private organizations, such as the New Jersey Association for the Blind, pooled their resources to secure legislation to promote research into blindness prevention. Eye Health Services were formally established in 1943 under the supervision of the late Emma Howe, which included the nation's first traveling eye unit and a glaucoma registry. These Commission services have continued to grow over the years with the Better Eye-Health Services and Treatment (Project BEST) program, which provides services in the areas of eye health and eye safety by offering free vision screenings for adults and children, with a concerted effort to provide these services to historically underserved sectors of the population (low income, elderly, minorities, people with diabetes, and individuals with special needs).

Under the direction of Joseph Kohn, (1964-1976), the size and scope of the Commission's staff and service programs more than doubled. Significant expansions occurred in many departments: social services, rehabilitation teaching, eye health nursing, the home industries program, vocational rehabilitation, an expanded contract workshop program, the opening of the George Meyer Textbook and Materials Center, preschool eye screening programs, and many more.

With the establishment of the first Consumer Forum in 1964, under the auspices of Governor Richard Hughes, consumers and other interested individuals began to

take active participation in the Commission's decision and policy-making procedures. Now the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, advises and works in partnership with CBVI administration and staff.

CBVI, known as the Commission for the Blind until 1982, was at the forefront of that movement and still works diligently toward the realization of new levels of achievement in



the quest for equal opportunity in education, employment, and community integration.

Although the Commission's scope of services has significantly expanded since 1910, the established direction is still an integral part of today's programs and policies as well as tomorrow's goals and aspirations.

Statewide Impact of CBVI Services

Numbers indicate total residents served by CBVI. (Please note that individuals may be served in multiple programs):

	COUNTY	ED	IL	IL-OB	VR	PB*
1	Atlantic	73	78	152	103	19
2	Bergen	168	68	163	272	1
3	Burlington	132	77	218	218	6
4	Camden	200	127	185	236	16
5	Cape May	20	25	47	45	4
6	Cumberland	57	58	59	58	4
7	Essex	191	162	371	371	13
8	Gloucester	102	57	103	108	2
9	Hudson	100	91	113	208	11
10	Hunterdon	27	10	18	30	0
11	Mercer	96	47	95	147	13
12	Middlesex	224	101	199	308	12
13	Monmouth	186	96	202	221	5
14	Morris	107	59	90	160	4
15	Ocean	203	88	370	189	6
16	Passaic	145	69	117	171	10
17	Salem	15	14	33	16	0
18	Somerset	92	38	74	115	0
19	Sussex	37	22	20	37	2
20	Union	136	88	138	207	9
21	Warren	14	15	25	11	1

* Explanation of Abbreviations

ED-Education (Ages: 0-21 years)

IL-Independent Living (Ages: 54 years and younger)

IL-OB – Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind (Ages: 55 years +)

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation (Ages: 14 years and older)

PB – Project BEST (Serving all age groups)

Employment Outcomes in FFY 2017:

*191 total employment outcomes



5.2%	Management
5.2%	Business and Financial
2.6%	Computer and Mathematical
1.0%	Architecture and Engineering
1.6%	Life, Physical, and Social Science
2.6%	Community and Social Services
4.2%	Education, Training, and Library
1.0%	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
2.6%	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
6.3%	Healthcare Support
0.5%	Protective Service
3.7%	Food Preparation and Serving
5.2%	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
5.8%	Personal Care and Service
8.9%	Sales
13.1%	Office and Administrative Support
3.7%	Construction and Extraction
3.7%	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
7.9%	Production
7.3%	Transportation and Material Moving
6.3%	Homemaker
1.6%	Business Enterprises New Jersey (Manager)



Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The following VR program profiles also include spotlight features on individuals who have made great strides in this past year toward greater independence, academic achievement, and successful employment. At CBVI, success is not only defined by the acquisition of employment, but multiple times throughout life, as it occurs each time one overcomes barriers, makes significant progress, and achieves one's goals.

VR services provided by the Commission under this program are designed to assist individuals who are blind, vision-impaired, and deaf-blind to prepare for, secure, retain, or advance in employment that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, and informed choice. The scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services includes:

- ◆ Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs by qualified personnel;
- ◆ VR counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice, including referral and services from other agencies;
- ◆ Physical and mental restoration services;
- ◆ Vocational and other training services;
- ◆ Maintenance and transportation related to the rendering of any VR services;
- ◆ Vocational rehabilitation services to family members to assist in achieving the employment goal for an individual with a disability, e.g., family counseling;
- ◆ Interpreter services, including sign language and oral interpreter services, for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and tactile interpreting services for individuals who are deaf-blind;
- ◆ Independent living skills instruction including personal and home management;
- ◆ Orientation and mobility services to instruct in methods of independent community travel;
- ◆ Services to assist students to transition from school to work;
- ◆ Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- ◆ Supported employment services;
- ◆ Personal assistance services, including reader services;
- ◆ Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies;
- ◆ Technical assistance to individuals who are pursuing self-employment;
- ◆ Rehabilitation technology services and devices; and
- ◆ Post-employment services, i.e., short term services required to keep a job.



Maria Buttitta



Maria Buttitta has demonstrated that with dedication, perseverance, and the right tools, all goals can be reached. Maria has overcome many obstacles since childhood from blindness, mental illness, and other challenges that comes with being different. She was born in Sicily, Italy and came with her family to the United States to seek medical aid and more opportunities. With the assistance of resources like the Commission, Maria has been able to overcome many barriers and be an inspiration to others who are going through similar challenges. An accomplished speaker, writer, and advocate, she has published a memoir that gives great detail of every obstacle she has faced and how she has successfully overcome it all. Her book is titled “Now I SEE: How I Battled Blindness, Mental Illness, an Espresso

Habit and Lived to Tell the Tale.” Maria is currently continuing her education by pursuing a Master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

When she was asked how she feels the services from the Commission have helped her, she stated, “Growing up in Sicily was tough because teachers viewed my blindness as a limitation. Nine years ago, I moved to New Jersey and that’s when I finally connected with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. They didn’t see my blindness as a limitation, instead, they believed in me. They helped me see beyond those limitations. They helped me gain independence, confidence, and skills, and have been a huge support throughout my college education. For the first time in my life, I can see a brighter future.”

Pre-Employment Transition Services

In FFY 2017, the Commission continued to expand and evolve its Pre-Employment Transition Services in alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the most recent reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Commission has a long history of providing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to students and youth with disabilities with dedicated programs going back nearly 50 years. CBVI currently has six Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors dedicated to working with high school students, four Counselors dedicated to our consumers enrolled in College full-time, and many more programs that have been

developed and continue to evolve to meet the needs of our consumers and the federal regulations that govern the VR program. These transition programs include Life 101, EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement) 1.0 and 2.0, Work Skills Preparation, and College Prep Experience.

Pre-Employment Transition Services are available to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities, ages 14 to 21, and include: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, and counseling on post-secondary enrollment opportunities.



Life 101

Life 101 is a two-week, residential program conducted at the Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC). Life 101 takes place at the end of July into the beginning of August, and is designed for ninth and tenth grade students. The program is comprised of interactive and community-based activities, focused on career exploration, independent living skills, and post-secondary education; evening outings are designed to promote independence, and themes related to communication, self-advocacy, decision making, and leadership are addressed throughout the program. The ultimate goal of Life 101 is to give the enrolled participants a hands-on learning experience through which students are empowered with the necessary tools to facilitate their transition following high school graduation.

Natasha Ishaq



Natasha Ishaq has been a consumer with CBVI for over ten years. Recently, during the summer of 2017, after completing her sophomore year in high school, Natasha chose to participate in the Life 101 program at the Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC). She explained, “I had heard a lot about the program. I had been told that it was both

educational and a lot of fun. Having the experience of living somewhat independently, getting to know other students my age facing similar circumstances, and simultaneously having the opportunity to learn about valuable life skills as a vision-impaired individual motivated me to enroll in the program.”



While at JKTC, Natasha was introduced to different instructional areas. She elaborated that she learned various technology, budgeting, and overall independent living skills. Natasha shared that her family and friends noticed how confident she became after the program, and specifically mentioned that her skills in traveling independently were significantly improved. One valuable lesson that Natasha gained was the mindset to deal with simple or complicated tasks by thinking outside the box. According to Natasha, “thinking outside the box is vitally important when it comes to finding solutions to problems.”

Natasha also stated that the most memorable events of the JKTC program were the interpersonal interactions. She stated, “getting to know the instructors and staff on a personal level was nothing short of a privilege. I would find myself sharing my own story with my peers as we became friends. If anything, we learned from each other. . . . I am able to gain insight from others who have walked in my shoes before, because of who the Commission has introduced me to, whether it be Mr. Frye, the Director; various Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI);

or other students.” Natasha has answers for questions that may come from future Life 101 students. “I would tell any potential JKTC student to not be fearful or afraid. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn valuable skills on living independently with your disability. Interact with other consumers, instructors, and staff members,” Natasha advises.

In her leisure time, Natasha enjoys reading, writing, playing piano, singing, watching television, and talking to friends. She also continues to be involved in CBVI programs as an active participant in the EDGE 1.0 program. A quote Natasha appreciates is by Winston Churchill: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

After she completes high school, Natasha would like to go on to college. She plans to earn a doctorate in English, a minor in Political Science, and potentially a law degree. She is passionate about working as a lawyer in the advocacy field for various social issues. Natasha states, “I want to leave an impact on my community, country, and world through writing, speaking, and, ultimately, helping others.”



EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement) 1.0

Now in its third year, the EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement) program helps prepare blind and vision-impaired high school students receiving transition services from the Commission to become successful professionals. Students attend monthly workshops at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick. Between these sessions, they participate in monthly conference calls where they hone their professional, self-advocacy, and independent living skills. Additionally, students also attend regularly scheduled community trips where they enjoy opportunities to socialize with other blind peers, build life skills, and learn about opportunities to find employment or become more involved in extracurricular activities. The program is run and staffed by successful blind and vision-impaired individuals, who understand the importance of instilling blind youth with a belief in independence and confidence for them to become successful adults, professionals, and members of their communities.

Jose Dominguez



Jose Dominguez's love for theater keeps him traveling to Manhattan on most weekends, not as an audience member, but as a performer. He is involved with multiple acting groups in the New York area and is writing and producing a play highlighting characters with disabilities for his high school's capstone

project. Jose has never allowed others to define him by his vision impairment as he has pursued his dreams of becoming a professional actor. Instead, with the help of the EDGE program, he has come to embrace his vision impairment and blossomed into a confident, independent young adult.



During his two-and-a-half years in the EDGE program, Jose has connected with many of the program’s mentors; successful blind professionals that guide students as they prepare for and pursue their careers. Jose regards these relationships as the most valuable part of the program, explaining that learning about their successes encourages him to “keep pushing” despite people’s misconceptions about what he can do as someone with a disability. Beyond motivation, Jose says the EDGE staff have shown him that effective solutions to addressing societal barriers exist. Although “society shuts its door on us,” he remarked, there are “ways we can go around” such obstacles. Jose has also leveraged the knowledge of EDGE staff to become more involved in the blindness community. He is planning on participating in the National Federation of the Blind’s arts fair this year. Jose is similarly supported by his connections with his peers in the program. Surrounded by

fellow blind and vision-impaired high school students, Jose feels there is a strong sense of camaraderie and mutual support at events. He describes how everyone comes together as “a group of human beings,” where concerns about being judged by the public are absent and an environment of positive encouragement thrives. Jose has already experienced the benefits of the EDGE program in the pursuit of his acting passion. Initially unnerved by the prospect of missing a word while reading lines for auditions, Jose now takes on this task with poise. He has developed greater comfort towards his disability with the assistance and support of the EDGE program, and he feels confident that his acting skills will naturally manifest themselves as a result. He strongly believes that he will be seen on television one day, and he hopes to use this opportunity to change peoples’ attitudes and expectations about people with disabilities.

EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement) 2.0

EDGE 2.0 serves over twenty college undergraduates across New Jersey and Pennsylvania who are blind and vision-impaired. Students learn how to maximize their college experience through an individualized assimilation plan that addresses barriers on campus, sets academic and social goals, as well as establishes plans for campus and community engagement. An intensive curriculum from Learning Ally accompanies the program and targets research-based skillsets necessary for college success. As upperclassmen in the program, students have career development plans that provide a map to graduation and a guide to careers in their fields of interest. In addition, students participate in campus visits with a career advisor, monthly mentor conversations, and peer meetings with career-centered activities. Using each of these resources and a career-focused approach, students enhance their ability to become employed competitively in their field of choice.

Jonathan Zobek



Jonathan Zobek is not one to shy away from new experiences. As a sophomore at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), Jonathan is already an active member of the campus community and the blind community in New Jersey. His initiative to become involved and create meaningful social and professional

networks is pivotal to college success. Jonathan is currently serving as Vice President for the National Federation of the Blind's New Jersey Association of Blind Students, a disc jockey for WTSR campus radio, and an active member of Catholic Campus Ministries and Students for Disability Awareness. Jonathan's



passion for learning goes beyond the classroom and his resiliency will lead to a successful college and professional career.

In high school, Jonathan was one of the first members of EDGE 1.0 and took part in as many activities as possible to advance his profile. As a high school student, Jonathan attended the College Prep Summer Program housed at TCNJ and learned new skills such as public speaking, refined his travel skills, and managed a college workload. He took these skills with him to college, discovering both academic and social success.

When Jonathan first arrived at TCNJ last fall, he wasn't able to navigate the campus and was apprehensive about being in a new environment. Jonathan took the initiative to practice independently, ask strangers for guidance, and review routes with friends. He also received training from the Commission to learn specific nonvisual techniques to travel safely and independently. His independence and self-sufficiency shone through as he acclimated himself to the campus and community.

When Jonathan heard about the new EDGE college program, he was excited about the opportunity to advance his professional skills and continue his involvement with EDGE. As a member of EDGE 2.0, Jonathan was the first student to complete the Learning Ally curriculum and develop each of the skillsets identified in the courses. Using the information from the course "Communicating with your

Professors," Jonathan felt more prepared to work with instructors who made pervasive assumptions about his ability to succeed in their class. He learned to take the time to educate professors about his capabilities and to discuss it with them in person before resorting to negative emails or disability support services. During his monthly campus visits, Jonathan set academic and social goals for himself, including making the dean's list again, increasing his Braille fluency, and using public transportation for social opportunities. With the assistance of his career advisor, Jonathan was able to set up opportunities to audit Braille courses at TCNJ to increase his Braille skill set, and examine bus routes to determine points of interest. He was also able to sit down with a volunteer coordinator to find new opportunities to support his community.

As Jonathan continues in the EDGE 2.0 program, he will develop a career plan, including a degree and career map to navigate through his remaining years at TCNJ and ultimately acquire meaningful employment. EDGE 2.0 has helped Jonathan to think about the future and maintain a career-centered focus while at TCNJ. As an interpersonal communications major, Jonathan is passionate about working with students who are blind and vision-impaired, hoping to work with this population upon graduation. He aspires to use his experience and knowledge to guide students encountering similar challenges.

College Preparation Experience (CPE)

The College Preparation Experience (CPE) is an integrated part of The College of New Jersey's pre-College Program. This is a credit-bearing program for rising high school juniors and seniors who have a desire to attend college upon graduation. The program helps prepare students for college through college-level coursework, community engaged learning, and college-based workshops. This year, part of CPE included a two-week Orientation program in which students had the opportunity to practice blindness skills and college-readiness skills on TCNJ's campus. This included learning to navigate a college campus, practicing time-management, and beginning the process of writing essays for the college application process.

Anaes Allan and Ibrahim Mashal



In the summer of 2016, Anaes Allan and Ibrahim Mashal, entered the College Preparation Orientation before heading into their senior year of high school. The pair of friends strived to be leaders; from taking initiative, to helping staff, to finishing their homework early. Anaes and Ibrahim flourished in the new setting. At the end of the Orientation, the gentlemen saw that some of their peers were continuing on

with the program for another two-weeks because they were accepted into the TCNJ Pre-College Program, an integrated program which is designed to academically challenge the participants while fulfilling community service. Anaes and Ibrahim decided, at that moment to work even harder during their senior year for grades that would qualify them to compete for acceptance into this program the following summer.



Their story picks up again when, in the summer of 2017, the pair’s hard work paid off and they were both accepted into the College Preparation Experience. During College Prep Orientation, they were leaders amongst their peers, providing natural support for the first-year College Preparation Students. Throughout the integrated program, the young men demonstrated how hard they worked to earn their spot. Anaes quickly became “the star” during community service as he bonded with the young students they were mentoring. Ibrahim showed his dedication to his academics by working into the late hours of the night to make sure his assignments were done flawlessly. In the face of numerous challenges, including technical difficulties, busy schedules, and the temptation of socializing, Anaes and Ibrahim rose to exceed expectations and thrive in all aspects of this challenging program.

They both attend college at Montclair State University where they continue to learn and grow in their skills. Anes explains the impact the program had for his development, “the College Prep Experience program has helped me easily adapt and prepared me greatly for actual college life. Thanks to the program and it’s mentors, I was ready for the workload I’ve been receiving from my classes, and I’m also managing my time pretty well, which helped me complete everything punctually. I have completed many long writing assignments so far and did well on them because of the help and support I got from the advisors. The program has also helped me become responsible, independent, and definitely more confident towards fulfilling this college journey.”

Work Skills Preparation (WSP)

The Work Skills Preparation Program (WSP) is a pre-employment transition program for high school students (ages 16-21) who are blind and vision-impaired with additional disabilities, who would benefit from an employment outcome upon completion of high school. Consumers who attend WSP have a desire to work, are self-directed, and are able to work with or without support. WSP prepares consumers for life after high school by providing opportunities to practice functional academic skills, employment skills, and independent living skills in both classroom-based and community-based settings

Kesean Harris



Kesean Harris not only exceeded expectations for himself but also inspired his peers and staff to reach and go beyond their goals and others' expectations. On graduation day, 2017, there was not a dry eye in the house. One by one, the Lead Staff of the WSP program presented Kesean with a well-deserved award, the F.A.I.R.R. Award. F.A.I.R.R. is an acronym used in the program that stands for striving to be Flexible, Accepting, Independent, Respectful and Responsible. Each staff member prepared a speech. It was to no surprise that the detail of examples and accolades exceeded what was thought to be a "brief" presentation. Staff, students and families were moved by the humble and natural intuitions of this young man. With support, and an unfathomable amount of champions in his corner, Kesean is set up for a bright, successful future.

On move-in day, during the summer of 2016, Kesean Harris settled in for the Work Skills Preparation Program. From the start, Kesean exuded kindness. He was often found encouraging his peers and took initiative to help staff as well. Kesean's positivity radiated throughout the program and shined at work. While working at REI, a retail store for outdoor recreation, Kesean showed exemplary skills in all of the tasks he was delegated. He was professional with his supervisors, respected his job coaches, and gave helpful techniques and strategies that allowed his coworker (and peers in the WSP program) to succeed alongside him.

This past summer, Kesean's Transition Counselor referred him again, so the skills that were learned could be maximized to see even greater potential from Kesean. He brought with him the same helping-hand attitude from the previous summer. At work he went above and beyond the expectations, and was given the opportunity to shadow one of his employers, and Business Enterprise New Jersey (BENJ) managers, Bob Donoher, to learn more in depth of what goes on behind the scenes. Through it all, Kesean stayed motivated to learn and pushed himself to grow, emotionally and physically, and through this consistency—we know he will be an asset to his future employer.

Youth Employment Solutions (YES) Program

The Youth Employment Solutions (YES) Program is currently being piloted in partnership with TCNJ to service individuals 18-25 years old. TCNJ's role is to match a job seeker with a Support Specialist, whose goal is to engage the job seeker in the discovery process, using strategies that prove effective for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Support Specialist will lay the foundation of job development, and deliverables, (i.e., Person-Centered Planning Tool, Brochure, Visual Resume) are put in place to help support the job coach with job development, and to raise awareness of greater potential. It's a win-win-win with YES Support Specialists working with CBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to support their caseload and teaming up with the SE agency to support job development and coaching to lead to greater outcomes!

Kirsten Schlaegel



Kirsten Schlaegel, a teenager at Lindenwold High School, attended the Work Skills Prep (WSP) program in the summer of 2009, where she was able to job sample, learn daily living skills, and work toward being a more independent young woman. Kirsten was soft spoken and driven. She had a good foundation of work skills, a positive approach to trying new tasks, and a solid work ethic. Through her high school work experiences, and community-based job sampling at WSP, Kirsten continued to develop a sense of the type of work she could see herself doing in the future.

Fast forward to 2017; Kirsten was a candidate for the Youth Employment Solutions (YES) initiative. Although Kirsten had the

skills and motivation to work, she had not been able to find a job that was a “match” for her skills, interests, and personality.

Kirsten began working with her YES Support Specialist, Elizabeth Mikotowicz, in the winter of 2017. Elizabeth met with Kirsten over the course of several months, and she collaborated with Kirsten's family, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Job Coach, and others in order to strengthen rapport and communication among all those providing support for Kirsten. Through this method of collaboration and Person-Centered activities, called the Discovery Process, Elizabeth was able to get a clear idea of the direction Kirsten wanted to go with regards to finding employment. Elizabeth was able to determine things like the conditions for employment (what works/what doesn't work), Kirsten's specific interests, skills, and goals. Kirsten had always seen herself working in a bookstore, or library. Through a Customized Employment approach, in which Elizabeth worked with the business to identify a job that matched both the needs of the business and Kirsten's skills, Elizabeth was able to assist in finding a job match for Kirsten.

Kirsten has been employed by Inkwood Books, in Haddonfield, New Jersey, since the Spring of 2017. She is happy, working, and fulfilling one of her biggest goals.

Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC)

The Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC) is a state of the art facility that offers vocational rehabilitation, employment services, and independent living skills training for consumers of the Commission. The JKTC is a three-floor residential center and houses meeting and conference rooms, classrooms, a cafeteria, a gym, a recreation room, a student lounge, an accessible kitchen, a technology demonstration and evaluation center, and student dorms.

The mission of the JKTC is to assist blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired individuals to lead full and productive lives as they live and work in their communities. The program is customized for each consumer and can range in duration from approximately 2 weeks to 20 weeks or more.

Ilire Goca



Ilire Goca has been a consumer of CBVI services throughout her life, and she enrolled in the JKTC training program in the Summer of 2017 following high school graduation, with the goal of becoming more confident and independent as a person who is blind and a rising college Freshman. Her Orientation and Mobility instruction gave her the confidence to travel independently, including the use of public transportation. She learned additional kitchen skills, financial literacy, and furthered her Braille and communication skills, which will help boost her math and writing success in college. She increased her technology skills on the Braille notetaker; JAWS (a screen reading software); iOS devices; and learned advanced MS Office skills. Her careers class helped her further explore her goals and gain valuable information about Kutztown University's Teacher of the Visually Impaired program, where she will be starting as a freshman

in 2018. Ilire has words of wisdom for potential JKTC students: "If you want to learn essential blindness skills and make awesome friends, this is the right place to be." She also encourages other blind and vision impaired students to aim for independence. She says that CBVI consumers should "become independent by going out of their comfort zones and trying something that they may not have tried before."

Ilire is an exceptional young woman who has embraced every opportunity, and she continually pushed herself to succeed. She has participated in many of CBVI's programs, including the College Prep Experience, EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement), and Life 101 high school transition program. Ilire is also in the first cohort for EDGE 2.0, a program aimed at increasing college students' success as they transition to post-secondary education.

In 2018, Ilire will attend Kutztown University in Pennsylvania, majoring in Special Education. She would like to become a certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired and hopes to someday work for CBVI or a school for the blind. She is looking forward to teaching her students through the use of the latest technology tools. In her free time, Ilire loves to listen to music, spend quality time with family, hang out with friends, surf the Internet, read, and exercise.

Ilire's favorite quote is a quote by Helen Keller: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart."

Technological Support Services

Assistive technology support is available to consumers to train, gain, retain, or advance one's employment. Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. The Agency's Technological Support Services department assists consumers in gaining direct access to computer equipment and other technology through a comprehensive assessment of skill and accessibility needs. The purpose of the unit is to minimize barriers while also taking into account the consumers' unique situation, making recommendations that would enable the individual to efficiently address his/her professional or academic responsibilities. Technological Services Specialists (TSSs) are responsible for maintaining and staffing six comprehensive and up-to-date Regional Technology Assistance Centers (RTACs) located throughout New Jersey in Newark, Freehold, Cherry Hill, Atlantic City, Trenton, and New Brunswick.

William Brooks



William Brooks is a chaplain at the Ocean County Jail with a wide range of responsibilities. In his role, Mr. Brooks administers individual and group sessions for the prisoners. He is responsible for preparing the topics for the sessions, researching appropriate videos to show during the sessions, completing session notes, maintaining a calendar, and responding to work emails.

When Mr. Brooks first came to the Commission in 2014, he was struggling to complete his required tasks independently due to his vision loss. He worked with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to evaluate his needs, and determine what services would help him remain successful in his career. In addition to Independent Living services, Assistive Technology was one of the



primary services Mr. Brooks received, and where he really stood out. Through observation and implementation, he was recommended software and hardware to assist in increasing his daily independence at his employment. William was trained to use the adaptive software and hardware and stayed in regular communication with CBVI staff to give updates on how the technology training was going, and how it was benefiting him.

Three years later, Mr. Brooks returned for an assessment, as he was faced with new responsibilities at work that required new tools and solutions. Together with the assistance and guidance of a CBVI Technological Services Specialist, he tried multiple portable and transportable CCTV options until he found one that was a perfect fit for his unique needs.

It allows him to easily bring the device to and from these groups and his office where he can review printed materials that are not available in electronic format.

During this assessment he also shared how his technology devices have made his life easier. William's dedication and enthusiasm truly stood out because he embraced the tools provided to him, maintained the equipment and software, and proved how they allowed him to continue to be independent and successful in his career and at home. When asked how he feels about the services that were provided to him he said, "without the CBVI services, I could not function at home or at work, and this has given me my life back since I lost my vision. I do not know where I would be today without these services I have received."

Self-Employment - Earl Knight



Earl Knight is the CEO of GoBabl, a software company now based out of Philadelphia. Mr. Knight was a lifelong recipient of a range of CBVI services, including education, independent living, and vocational rehabilitation services. He graduated in 2012 from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Marketing. In late 2015, Mr. Knight successfully secured a small business grant from CBVI's Vocational Rehabilitation Unit to create and launch GoBabl. GoBabl provides location based social media monitoring and engagement platforms that can help individuals, brands, businesses, and government organizations to quickly identify, capture, and analyze social media data from multiple platforms, and do a deeper analysis about where social media

conversations are occurring about their brand, product, and service. GoBabl has been featured in multiple online publications focused on small businesses, social media, and technology. This dynamic small business boasts notable customers, including the Dallas Cowboys. Below, Mr. Knight tells his story of receiving services from CBVI, and his journey to become CEO of a successful software start-up company.

Being born in a time where there is so much adversity isn't easy for anyone. Now couple that with blindness, a speech impediment, and albinism. The odds are very low for a life of normalcy when all those "factors" are in play. I could have used all of these "factors" as an excuse, but my family and the State of New Jersey wouldn't allow that.

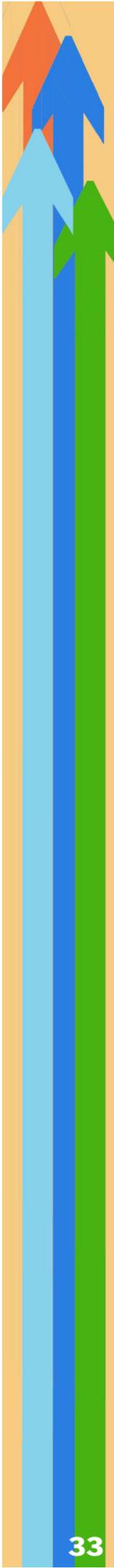


My mother and father had the presence of mind to enroll me into the Commission of the Blind and Visually Impaired at a very young age. They took their time and paid close attention to addressing my needs and really defining my weaknesses and strengths. There was no stone unturned when it came to finding out what success would look like for me. At this time, I must give a personal thank you to Joan McCann, who was my Teacher of the Visually Impaired from ages five through sixteen. She would come to my home, my school, and my basketball games. She worked as an extension of CBVI. She played the role of an angel rather than a case worker. She provided glasses, contacts, goggles, and kept my teachers on their toes. It felt like I had two mothers advocating for my educational progress. Although I had more than enough assistance, it was met with my resilience and commitment to be independent of the title of being “disabled.” In my eyes, I was a normal kid with no setbacks. This made everyone’s job much harder, and I liked it that way. But as I grew, CBVI, Joan, and my family grew with me, and, we figured out a balance. I ended up receiving a basketball scholarship to a Division 1 college that played in the NCAA tournament. While in college, CBVI followed my progress and when I needed them they were there to provide financial support where needed, and to

facilitate my independence. When it was time for me to graduate, I decided to continue with basketball.

I travelled to Sweden to further my basketball career. When I got back, I started working, and I soon found that a regular 9-5 job was not for me. I started building my company, GoBabl. I reached out to Darren Rago, my Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and CBVI once again, who were there to lend guidance when I had none. The small business grant funding that they provided led to the development of our first software prototype. We purchased Cloud storage, Web hosting, Search Engine Optimization, and marketing, and I started building my core team. We started generating sales after about 6 months. Now we are in a very weird place with lots of accolades, write-ups, and a big client in the Dallas Cowboys. We are still actively seeking funding for the extended development of our platform. Although we are not there yet, because of CBVI and all those from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, we are closer than ever, and I am so thankful!

To all those who feel like they were not given an opportunity, or they have too many hurdles to climb. Take this message as a public service announcement: there is always a way. You just have to be willing to ask for help and take action once you get it.



Business Enterprises New Jersey (BENJ)

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) is the State Licensing Agency (SLA) for the Federal Randolph-Sheppard program. Business Enterprises New Jersey (BENJ), a unit within CBVI, directly oversees New Jersey's Randolph Sheppard program. As such, BENJ is responsible for coordinating the operation of fifty-three (53) Randolph Sheppard food service locations across the state. The types of operations include: 7 cafeterias, 6 single person sites (dry stands), 1 military cafeteria, 22 snack bars, and 17 vending sites.

Individuals who wish to enter BENJ are required to: be at least 18 years of age, be legally blind, have a high school diploma (or GED), pass a background check, and be a United States citizen. The BENJ unit is comprised of: one Supervising Community Program Specialist, 7 Field Representatives, and one Administrative Assistant.

New Locations Setup:

- ◆ Converted East Jersey State Prison into a satellite location;
- ◆ Converted Monmouth County Courthouse East and West into one location;
- ◆ Ongoing ordering new vending machines for our locations that are user friendly for both our Blind Managers and customers;
- ◆ At least five Blind Managers are using the iPad cash register systems for their locations, with more showing interest.
- ◆ One Blind Manager is using the Clover cash register system for his location.

BENJ 2018 Initiatives:

- ◆ BENJ has incorporated the Hadley Institute for the Blind & Visually Impaired's Business Enterprise Program Licensee Training (BEPLT) into training requirements for the program.
- ◆ Several potential candidates have enrolled in the Hadley Institute for the Blind & Visually Impaired's BEPLT.
- ◆ BENJ is currently pursuing several opportunities presented by the General Services Administration (GSA).
- ◆ BENJ is currently in the process of developing vending opportunities within the private sector.
- ◆ BENJ, in July 2017, implemented the revised administrative code governing the program NJAC 10:97.
- ◆ Continuing education programs for upward mobility training for Blind Managers are planned to be offered on a regular and continuing basis, consistent with the new program administrative code.
- ◆ The program will continue replacing aging vending machines with modern models at postal facilities and other vending locations.
- ◆ BENJ has started making renovations to some of the current locations.



Hilton Anthony Santiago



Hilton Anthony Santiago was born and raised in New Brunswick, NJ. He comes from a large Puerto Rican family of 8 siblings. Tony began to lose his sight at an early age; when he was in fifth grade he began to have difficulty reading, and by the age of 18 he had lost all of his sight.

Although losing his sight was a difficult adjustment, Tony never got depressed over it, and quickly accepted that it was his new reality and was determined to succeed. “I was not going to let my situation get the best of me. Besides, I had no choice. Being the youngest in my family with so many siblings for my parents to take care of, put me in a position that I had to fend for myself, so I did.”

After graduating from high school, Tony worked a couple different jobs and obtained a certificate in Web Design from Middlesex

College before graduating from the BENJ program in 1993. However, due to extenuating life circumstances, he had to leave the program for a few years and take care of his two young boys, ages five and three.

One never to give up, he came back into the BENJ program and again graduated in 1997. Shortly thereafter, he won the bid for the Eatontown Post Office. Sales were very poor at this location, but Tony quickly improved the business by listening and meeting the needs of his customers.

After two years at Eatontown he won the bid to his present location at the Trenton Motor Vehicle Complex where he also services several nearby offices. His son Anthony Ismael, who is employed as an auto mechanic for Sears, assists him part time. Despite the business doing well he is always seeking ways to improve and grow



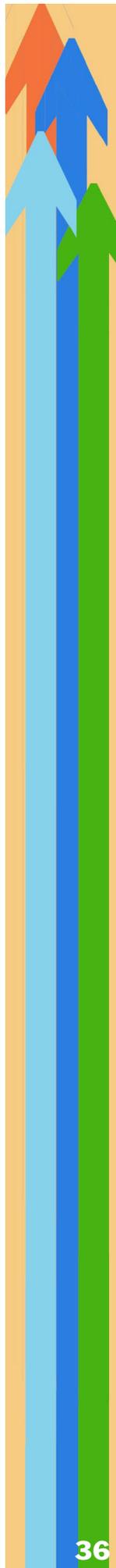
his business. He derives great pleasure in providing and taking care of the needs of his customers.

Tony is always willing to help fellow managers in the program. He has done on-the-job-training for new members of the BENJ program and is quick to assist any manager with any issues they may have. Tony is grateful to be part of the BENJ family. He feels that the BENJ program has given him a great opportunity to earn a good living as a businessman.

In addition to his work in BENJ, Tony is an avid baseball player. He has participated

in six Beep Baseball World Series since 2006. He also does demonstrations around the state in “One-Touch” self-defense, a form of self-defense for the vision-impaired. Tony lives with his wife Jocelyn, who is also blind and works as a nurse for CBVI, and his two children.

When asked, “What does it take to succeed in business?” Tony replies, “You have to know your business well and know where it is going. Always listen to your customers and seek new ways to improve customer service. I exist as a businessman because customers exist, so I make sure I service them well.”



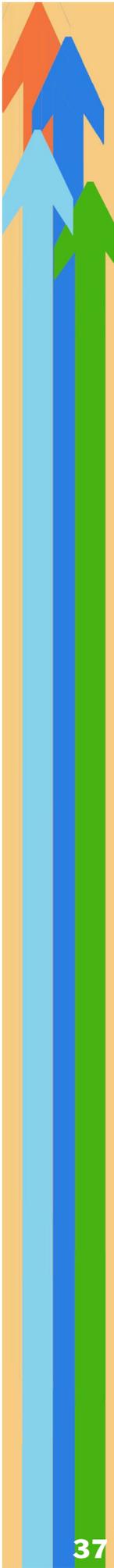
Partnership with Bank of New York Mellon



This has been an exciting year for the Business Enterprises New Jersey (BENJ) program as we have decided to venture into new territory. The Business Enterprises New Jersey operates under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, which mandates a priority to blind persons to operate vending facilities on Federal Property. The Randolph-Sheppard program is administered in each state by the State Licensing Agency (SLA) and has since been broadened to include state, county, municipal, and private locations. In New Jersey the New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI) is the SLA. CBVI is happy to announce that at the beginning of the year in February, we entered into our first private venture for a BENJ location. The private sector location is at the Bank of New York Mellon, located in Woodland Park, NJ.

BENJ collaborated with the RSA Management Group and Bank of NY Mellon and opened a Micro-Market. Micro-Markets are a concept based on a retail food establishment, and the focus is on a select group of consumers, as in the employees at the Bank of NY facility. Micro-Markets offer “better-for-you” items usually in fresh fruit and food categories. Micro-Markets distinguish themselves from the traditional convenience store by including the highest quality fresh food, such as sandwiches, soups, and salads. They focus on providing the highest quality product and variety for an audience of high volume or customer traffic. They also offer the traditional hot and cold beverages, candy, and snack food items.

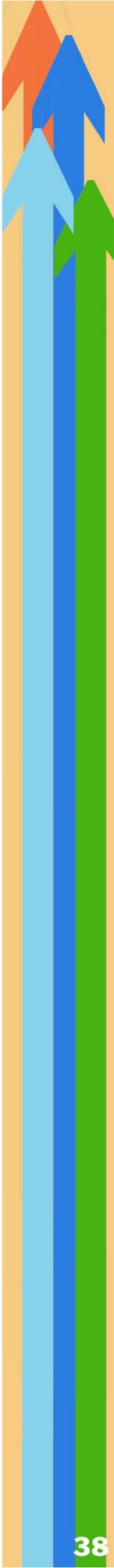
One of the ways the program looked to achieve this at the Bank of NY Mellon was to do some taste testing on various



products, including different coffee brands, salads, gourmet sandwiches, along with traditional frozen food items like pizza and cheeseburgers. Different employee engagement events were conducted throughout the spring of 2017 that included games and free samples. In doing so, this provided optimal feedback from the employees in the building in what type of products they would be most interested in purchasing from the micro market.

One of the benefits of operating the micro market at the Bank of NY is that the building is secure and occupied by the large employee population. This makes an ideal situation for a micro market as it can be cashierless and operated 24/7. Although the one at Bank of NY does have an employee at certain times of the day, it can still be operated without

one. The micro market is comprised of freestanding storage, which contains products with a nearby checkout system. The checkout system is capable of taking credit cards or preloaded cards for payment. A customer brings their item to the kiosk to scan then uses their preloaded card to make the purchase. In addition to being a cashless system, the manager can monitor their sales records from their computer or mobile device, seeing what items are being sold or need to be replaced. There are security measures in place for the micro market as it can be operated without a cashier. There are security cameras in place throughout the location. The micro market located at Bank of NY Mellon is operated by BENJ licensed manager, Nicky Gacos, with one employee.



Business Relations Unit (BRU)

The Business Relations Unit (BRU) of CBVI provides services to both public and private sector businesses in order to assist them with meeting their diversity initiatives in hiring individuals with disabilities. The BRU partners with businesses to address their needs, such as education and technical assistance on recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees who are blind, deaf-blind, and vision-impaired. The BRU endeavors to present an alternative pool of candidates to businesses while attempting to break down any barriers of employment for people with disabilities, including assistive technology and accessibility consultation, in voting, volunteering in community organizations, peer support groups.

Mentoring Day at Shop-Rite - Beatrice Ponferrada

In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, CBVI and Shop-Rite (Ravitz Family Markets) partnered up to host a Mentoring Day. In order to prepare for Mentoring Day, Andrea Askie-Rosario, the CBVI Business Relations Specialist, and Mr. Brahl worked closely together. Prior to the event, Andrea and Katie Donnellon, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at CBVI, provided a Disability Awareness training to all the hiring managers from the various Shop-Rite locations in the Ravitz Family Markets. The training focused on the various services that CBVI offers to the consumers and to businesses. Additionally, CBVI staff answered common questions and dispelled myths around vision impairment. They then developed the objectives and activities for the Mentoring Day, which proved to be a wonderful opportunity for CBVI consumers to learn about the inner workings of a supermarket. It also provided firsthand experience working in the store's various departments, and an opportunity for CBVI consumers to showcase their skills and abilities in the retail sector.

Ten CBVI consumers participated in Mentoring Day at the Shop-Rite in Cherry Hill on October 18, 2017. In the morning, the participants had the opportunity to job shadow in the various departments, including customer service, bakery, produce, stocking shelves,

stockroom, bagging, and self-checkout. Each participant worked one-on-one assisting a team member to complete their various task in their department. The participants worked thirty minutes in each department and then rotated to a new department. The participants then took part in an open discussion about their experience working in the supermarket. Ken Brahl, the Senior Director of Labor Relations facilitated the discussion. Agency staff from CBVI's Cherry Hill Service Center also participated. Many of the participants reported that they learned a lot from this experience and had a better understanding of how a supermarket operates.

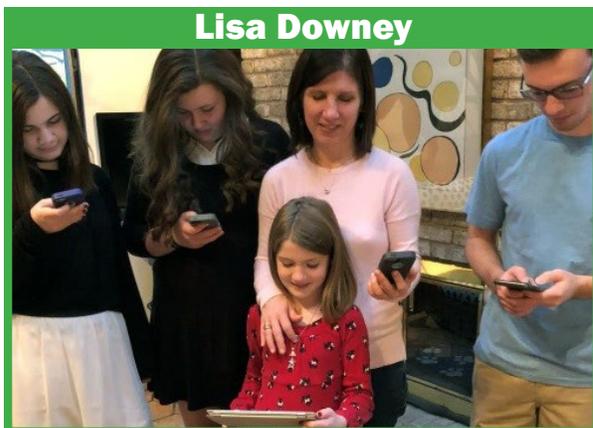
The event concluded with interviewing the participants that were interested in employment with Shop-Rite. The interviews were conducted by Mr. Brahl and the store hiring manager. As a result of this event, Beatrice Ponferrada was hired to work as a Bakery Clerk at ShopRite in Evesham, New Jersey. Mentoring Day gave Beatrice the opportunity to showcase her skills and abilities in a unique way; in addition to the more traditional interview process. Before Mentoring Day, Beatrice was a stay at home mom with two young boys and had been out of the workforce for about 10 years. Now, Beatrice works full time in the bakery department in the evenings.

Deaf-Blind Services

The Deaf-Blind Unit provides transition and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with dual sensory impairments, i.e., the combination of hearing and vision loss. The Agency employs two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (Deaf-Blind Specialists), one located in the Newark Service Center serving the northern region of the state and the other in the Freehold Service Center serving the southern half of the state. A full range of services are provided to assist individuals with hearing and vision loss to reach their highest level of independence and prepare for, obtain, or retain employment.

iCanConnect NJ

Now in its fifth year, this program has provided various types of assistive technology and telecommunication devices to over 100 New Jersey residents. Devices such as iPads, iPhones, Braille notetakers, laptops, screen readers, and adaptive software have been purchased for individuals meeting the program's eligibility requirements. This program was established in order to make sure that laws enacted in the 1980s and 1990s to increase the access of persons with disabilities to modern communications are brought up to date with 21st century technologies, including new digital, broadband, and mobile communications. Any New Jersey resident with combined hearing and vision loss can reach out to see if they qualify for the iCanConnect program to receive free technology to support distant communication. Program guidelines can be found at <http://www.icanconnect.org/see-if-you-qualify>.



Being a mom in this century doesn't come easy without the use of technology. Lisa Downey, Bayonne mom of four and consumer of the iCanConnect NJ Program, makes it look effortless although she says it wasn't always easy before she found the ICCNJ Program. Lisa just happened to discover the program

in 2013 while an iCanConnect program representative spoke about it on a TV segment that aired in the background.

At first, she was nervous about learning new technology, and now four years later she never hesitates to reach out to the program when she needs to upgrade or troubleshoot her devices.

"Everything is paperless today" she says as she juggles school calendars, after-school activities, play dates, and just checking on her new driver to ensure he arrives safely. "My son doesn't want to call me wherever he goes, so a simple text is just fine for me," as she giggled reminiscing about her flip phone.

"I couldn't live without my iPhone," she said. "I can monitor and approve apps the kids download, and I can even find new apps that meet my needs although I am still learning."

Support Services Providers of New Jersey (SSP-NJ)

The Support Services Providers of New Jersey Program, or SSP-NJ, is a consumer-driven program providing qualified trained professionals to support our deaf-blind New Jersey residents to promote independence. SSPs provide visual and environmental information, as well as human guiding, to acclimate the consumers to their environment so that they can make informed decisions. The program supports consumers in a variety of activities such as post-secondary education, household management, employment, health/well-being, and community integration. The relationship between the deaf-blind person and the SSP is a partnership based on trust and open, honest, and comfortable communication.

Jennifer Quigley



When the opportunity for the Support Services Providers (SSP) program to collaborate further with CBVI arose, Jennifer Quigley enthusiastically stepped up. Over the past year, the SSP-NJ program has worked in partnership with the Independent Living Unit of CBVI to provide support during the SHORE (Senior Hands-On Retreat Experience). The skill and quality of support the SSPs provide to deaf-blind consumers were also matched to the needs of the older blind consumers participating in the retreat. This additional layer of support during the leisure hours gave them the reassurance to become more independent.

Traveling to several locations throughout the state, Jen has provided her SSP services for the retreats and has seen first-hand the impact a service like this can make. When first arriving, she admitted that she noticed that consumers were nervous about their new

surroundings, meeting new people, and expectations. She shared, “consumers were really empowered to be independent and encouraged to ask for help when they needed it. At first, they may have needed assistance to charge their technology equipment. Then, as the retreat progressed, the consumers felt more comfortable and confident in themselves.”

“Every single consumer I have worked with feels more comfortable knowing they have someone, an SSP, to help them while still maintaining their independence,” Jen added. This collaboration has led to the continuation of SSP services for the consumers after returning home from the retreat. The consumers expressed excitement when learning about all the services offered, including the Assistive Support Programs for Independence, Renewal, and Education (ASPIRE) support groups. Jen added, “SSP has changed my life, and the lives of the people with whom I work, and I feel good knowing I’m making a difference.”

One consumer Jennifer works with, Mary Javorsky, explains how the SSP program has impacted her life: “I’ve noticed a big difference in the way I do things. My needs are met, and she’s helped me a lot. I feel very good these days; I don’t worry as much now that I have my SSP helping me.”



Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services are designed to assist individuals of all ages who are blind, vision-impaired, or deaf-blind gain and adapt the skills needed to lead full and productive lives. CBVI provides assistance and instruction in the areas of daily living, communication, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, Braille instruction, eye health education, and low-vision services.

Aaliyah McKethan and Aiko Gunnarson

Aaliyah McKethan, like most high school freshmen, enjoys hanging out with her friends, participating in extracurricular activities at school, and going to Starbucks. Aiko Gunnarson, an eighth grader, also enjoys her friends, participating in the afterschool Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) program, and taking kickboxing classes. Both girls have very limited vision due to Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, they both read Braille, and are cane travelers. They reside in Atlantic County, and although they attend different schools, they have become friends through various group Orientation & Mobility (O&M) experiences provided through the Independent Living Unit of the Commission. During one such experience in Philadelphia, while sitting at lunch at the Reading Terminal Market, Aaliyah began talking with Aiko about the camp she attends every summer. As the girls carried on their enthusiastic planning for Aiko's first year at camp the following summer, the conversation turned to how the camp holds a benefit 5K Turkey Trot on the Friday after Thanksgiving, and the girls immediately wanted to know if they could participate in the run that year. Their mothers were interested as well, since improving their overall physical activity has been a recent theme in their travel lessons, and both girls were using the APH running kit at school. This conversation launched a renewed interest in both girls to continue with their running in preparation for the Turkey Trot. Information was shared with their mothers about a free phone app that would guide them through 9 weeks of training and prepare them for the race, in addition to a follow

up with their PE teachers in an ongoing effort to coordinate through the school.

On the day of the race they arrived ready to go and as excited as every other runner and walker there; they even had hats to celebrate the season. Both girls walked and ran the entire route. As they approached the finish line each girl responded to the cheering crowd and were both able to "Finish Strong" to the delight of their family members snapping pictures and taking video.

Before the race began, Aiko's grandfather expressed his concern that she was not going to be able to do this. At the finish line, he expressed his gratitude with a big hug and a "thank you" with tears in his eyes. As a result of this experience, both girls have become more confident in their travel skills and social experiences at school. Aiko was not able to go to camp this year, but she continues to work out with her mother and has taken up kick boxing. Aiko is now learning to cross light-controlled intersections in a small business district, and she is looking forward to some shopping experiences during the holiday season. Aaliyah made a very successful and smooth transition to high school and is now traveling through her entire class schedule independently. At the time the running app was introduced to Aaliyah, she was just beginning to use an iPhone. Today, she uses notes she records on her phone so they are available if she needs a reminder when traveling to classes, allowing a functional expansion of assistive technology skills to increase her independence.



Independent Living (55 and older) – Shirley and Tom Lynn

My name is Shirley Lynn, and my husband is Tom Lynn. We began our journey with the Independent Living Unit of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) in March 2011. My physician had just declared me legally blind after extensive testing, and it was at that time, I contacted the CBVI and filled out the necessary documentation to begin this new stage of my life.

From March 2011 to the present, I have been in contact with my CBVI Rehabilitation Teacher. She came to my home to evaluate me, my Activity of Daily Living Skills (ADL's), and how I was managing in my home. I was then assigned Orientation and Mobility instructors, who gave me cane mobility training to teach me to travel.

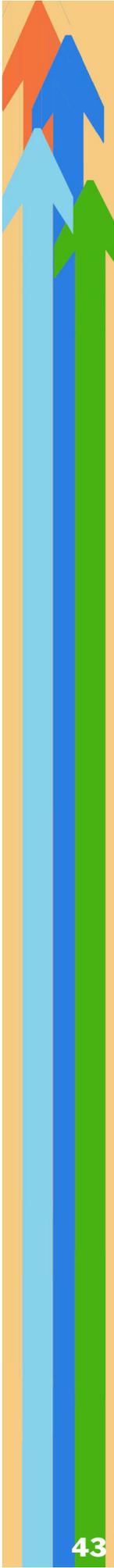
In November 2015, the Support Program Coordinator for ASPIRE, (CBVI's Peer Support Network), contacted me and asked if I would be interested in joining a support group in Pennsville, NJ. I agreed and started attending support group meetings. My husband and I were introduced to talking books; transportation (both county and Access Link); and how to use the transportation system. We now use these services weekly.

In November 2016, we participated in an ASPIRE facilitator training in Vineland, NJ. We were instructed on how to organize and setup a support group. In February 2017, we were asked by the Support Program Coordinator of ASPIRE to assume leadership of a support group based in Vineland, which was failing to thrive for lack of leadership. We accepted the position and have enjoyed organizing and assisting the members during these monthly meetings. We try to emulate what we have been taught by our mentors. We have a solid support group, who are

interested and engaged during the meetings. We try to have educational speakers who provide multiple ways for our group to learn new techniques and become aware of visual and hearing aids that will assist them with their Activities of Daily Living.

In May 2017, we were invited to attend the SHORE program scheduled for September 10-15, 2017, in Atlantic City, NJ. During this conference, I received computer training, which included how to use the programs Tap Tap See and Voice Over. I learned safe cooking techniques and received proper instruction on various devices to help me with Activities of Daily Living. I attended a lecture on the "Seven Stages of Blindness Adjustment", which helped my husband relate to my disability. We also attended a lecture by the Independent Living Deaf-Blind Consultant, who demonstrated assistive devices and information on deaf-blind services at CBVI. In addition, the conference ended with a lovely dinner dance and a farewell speech by the Executive Director, which was highly motivating and personally inspiring. I would be remiss if I did not mention how invaluable and incredible all the staff were, not only to me, but to everyone who attended the conference. Their kindness, compassion, knowledge and expertise were outstanding.

In conclusion, I have been blessed to be involved in the ASPIRE program. From the time that I was declared legally blind, the Commission has helped me increase my independence with confidence. I feel comfortable again in my home surroundings, and I can walk outside alone with my cane. We have the phenomenal staff from the Commission to thank for all of these wonderful blessings. My journey has not ended; it has just begun.



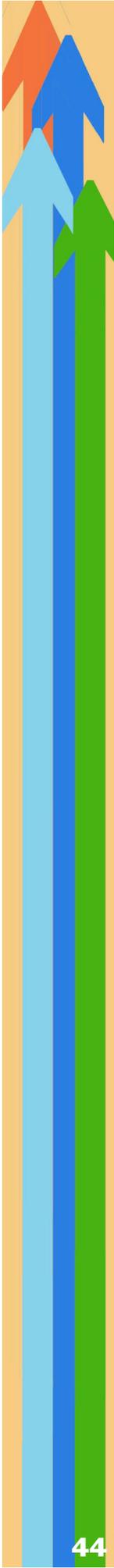
Assistive Support Programs for Independence Renewal and Education (ASPIRE)

Established in 2015, ASPIRE is a state-wide network of peer support groups designed to provide individuals who are living with vision loss the opportunity to gain the necessary coping skills, information, and education needed to thrive. ASPIRE offers individuals with vision loss the opportunity to become more socially engaged and connected with peers who face similar challenges and life experiences. Through attendance at monthly group meetings, program participants receive emotional support, exchange useful information, and find practical solutions for challenges that accompany low-vision and blindness. ASPIRE helps people with vision loss to realize they are not alone and that they can achieve much more than they ever thought possible. The ASPIRE Program has increased the number of Peer Support Groups in its network to a total of 48, four of which are established groups specifically for Veterans. ASPIRE connects with groups in all 21 of New Jersey's counties. Training for group facilitators is held annually.

Senior Hands-On Retreat Experience (SHORE)

The Senior Hands-On Retreat Experience (SHORE) provides consumers age 55+ the opportunity to participate in a six-day retreat geared toward providing real-life experiential learning. Three retreats, with a total of 31 participants, were held in various locations across the state in FFY 2017.

Throughout the week, seniors participated in an all-inclusive program that provided real-life experiential learning. While at the retreats, participants received instruction in intensive independent living, travel, health and wellness, assistive technology, communication, and self-advocacy skills. Consumers also obtained information about, and/or participated in, coping with vision loss, community integration, emergency preparedness, and leisure activity options. Some of the specific activities/lessons covered included eye health and nutrition, diabetic education, grocery shopping, kitchen safety, dining at restaurants, and music and relaxation therapy. By the end of the week, participants reported being more independent and confident in their skills, and their companions also began to encourage independence. Perhaps the best part of the program was that, amidst continual programming and events, it was evident that the participants bonded. The participants met in the evening and began sharing their knowledge and newly acquired skills with their new found friends, and many have continued to stay in touch with one another.



Library Equal Access Program (LEAP)

As the senior population increases, so do the number of blind and vision-impaired seniors who want and need access to assistive technology (AT). The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has recently made efforts to expand the array of Assistive Technology services that are available to this population. The Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) helps address 55 and older with a change in vision gain access to assistive technology in eight local libraries across the state in partnership with the New Jersey State Library Talking Book and Braille Center. The collaborative libraries are located in Mays Landing, South Orange, East Brunswick, Cherry Hill, Hackensack, Toms River, Morris Township, and Atlantic City. With assistive technology available now in local libraries across the state, blind and vision-impaired adults may take advantage of the library's resources, using the assistive technology provided by CBVI. In addition to rendering libraries more accessible, CBVI and technology training partner, Advancing Opportunities, use these eight LEAP locations to provide either small-group or individual instruction to a primarily blind and vision-impaired senior audience, in their local communities. When classes are not in session, the equipment provided - computers (with speech and magnification software), iPads, and a Closed Circuit Television System (CCTV) - may be used by library members.

Blindness Education Services

Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) work closely with the child, family members, and local school personnel to provide Blindness Education Services that make it possible for students who are blind, vision-impaired, or deaf-blind to participate equally with other students in general education classroom activities. These services are provided for eligible children (from birth through high school years) and their families.

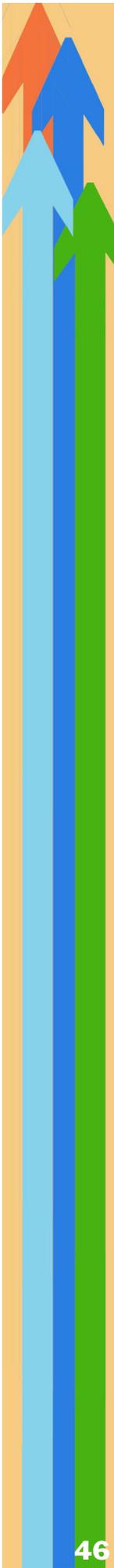
Sofia Ales



Sofia was born with microphthalmia in October of 2008. Her family was naturally concerned because she would have to have prosthetics and would be blind. She received Early Intervention services from the Commission, who helped Sofia and her parents keep her engaged with her environment and continue to meet developmental milestones. Her parents and grandparents played with her and stimulated Sofia so that she was constantly engaged and encouraged to explore. Her family was probably exhausted, but Sofia's brain was exercised constantly. Sofia had a much older brother and sister who also helped by taking her with them everywhere. It was extremely worrisome to her parents and grandparents, but they never let worry get in the way. Mom and dad still explain that they don't want Sofia to be treated differently. Sofia's parents treated her like any other child, and she never knew she was different. They allowed her to be a

child. Sofia has a cousin of the same age as a frequent playmate, and having him allowed her to play age-appropriate games; he never treated her as though she needed help, and would, in fact, cheat in games and steal toys from her, demonstrating that he saw her as his equal.

Today, Sofia is in the third grade at Lowell School in Teaneck, NJ. She excels in school in every way, reading higher level chapter books in Braille, getting excellent grades in every subject area, working independently throughout the day, and is now in a gifted and talented program. Sofia not only works independently in the classroom, but she travels independently throughout the building using her cane. Sofia also plays the piano and takes swimming lessons, and from all accounts, we will be seeing her at Carnegie Hall someday. She is highly motivated to do well in everything she attempts.



Clifton Boyd

Clifton is a 5th grade student who lives in Monmouth County. He was born with a progressive eye condition and began learning the Braille code when he was 5 years old. Over the past five years, Clifton has become proficient in Literary and Nemeth (math) Braille, and the many types of assistive and information technology to be successful at his school. When Clifton isn't in school, he makes YouTube videos on how to use the accessible features on the iPhone, iPad, and Android-based tablets. Recently, Clifton used his Perkins Braille writer to Braille short

holiday messages to veterans, thanking them for their service. Once he was done with the cards, he had the opportunity to decorate them to bring holiday spirit to the great men and women that have served our country. Clifton is a very sensitive and smart boy who is gaining a multitude of skills. The Commission's Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TVI), along with Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instructors, have been involved in both Clifton's school and home life to help to prepare and strengthen his independence.

Student Hands-On Alternative Reinforcement Program (SHARP)

In addition to CBVI's traditional education services, the SHARP Program, a vision of Executive Director Daniel Frye, is a summer program that provides an innovative approach to enable students with vision impairment, ages six through thirteen, to acquire and practice blindness skills in the areas of Braille, assistive technology, and independent living, including orientation and mobility. During the summer, students can attend the SHARP program, through hands-on and community field trips, experience, and practice. A total of 92 students in grades one through eight completed the program during the summer of 2017. The students also had an opportunity to interact with high school students from our Employment, Development, Guidance, and Engagement (EDGE) Program, who worked within SHARP as interns.

Project BEST (Better Eye-Health Services and Treatment)

Project BEST's mission is to provide vision screening to identify eye disease in target populations of New Jersey residents that do not have access to eye health care, facilitate treatment through community providers, and to serve as a robust source of CBVI referrals for those who meet the various eligibility criteria for blindness. Providing a growing array of services since 1979, the screening unit continues to meet its statutory obligation to increase access to the community.

Along with identifying those in need of eye health care and follow up, Project BEST provides outreach and education to those who host as well as participate in the eye screenings. Project BEST provides, in conjunction with the Department of Health and CDC, a Diabetic

Eye Disease Detection Screening, targeting populations with diagnosed Type II diabetes. The Early Childhood Screening program (Pre-School Vision Screenings) identifies impediments to education as well as eye disease specific to that age group. The number of Pre-School Vision screenings allows for earlier detection of vision problems leading to earlier intervention. Migrant Worker Screenings and the Adult Vision Screenings target primarily adult populations, but are available to children as well. All venues offer an eye health education component and may be able to assist those that self-identify as having diabetes. CBVI staff also advocates for Affordable Care Act enrollment for all eligible residents.

2017 Highlights (Number of People Served)

Adult Vision Screening	7,119
Pre-School Vision Screening	20,673
On-Site Screening	5,816
Migrant Screening	750
Diabetic Eye Disease Detection (DEDD) Program	1,157
Self-Identified as having Diabetes	1,970
Total Individuals Screened	35,525
Total Number of Screening Events	890
Referred for Further Evaluation	3,718
Referred for additional CBVI services	220

Project BEST strives to expand services to address the need for access to eye health care in all 21 Counties. Working closely with federally qualified health centers and other community-based medical hubs, and appearing at large public gatherings such as health fairs, Project BEST will continue to return people with vision loss or at risk of vision loss to the workforce, provide education regarding systemic health conditions associated with vision loss, and serve CBVI by identifying residents in need of blindness skills training services.



Did you know?

- ◆ The NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center offers an array of leisure reading and magazines in digital audio, Braille, and large print. Call 1-800-792-8322 or visit www.njsltbbc.org
- ◆ Bookshare.org offers thousands of leisure reading and academic materials in text to speech and embossed Braille formats. www.bookshare.org
- ◆ Learning Ally is a major provider of academic books on all levels in DAISY-format CD or download. www.learningally.org
- ◆ Newspaper reader services from NFB – NEWSLINE, sponsored by CBVI at 1-888-882-1629
- ◆ NFB-NEWSLINE is a free service available to anyone who is blind, deaf-blind, vision impaired or print-disabled. Funded by state sponsors, NFB-NEWSLINE offers over 400 publications to choose from, including ten national newspapers like the Wall Street Journal and USA Today, sixteen breaking news sources such as CNN, BBC, and ESPN Online, fourteen international newspapers including Financial Times and Vancouver Sun, and countless state newspapers, as well as fifty magazines like Family Circle, time, Consumer Reports, Jet, Guideposts, Smithsonian and more.

The Commission may be able to assist with*:

*Based on eligibility

- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation to help you obtain employment.
- ◆ Rehabilitation teaching to help you perform daily living tasks.
- ◆ Orientation and Mobility instruction to assist you in traveling independently.
- ◆ Referral to community resources for housing, financial assistance, and other supported services.

The Commission will respond to your concerns, if you are dissatisfied with the services you receive. Call the Office of the Executive Director at 973-648-2325.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) can assist you in resolving any disputes regarding provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services by calling: 1-800-922-7233. The CAP program is administered by Disability Rights New Jersey.

Para-transit can provide transportation to work, medical appointments, etc.. Call the NJ Transit Office of Special Services at 1-800-772-2287 to get the phone number for your County.



SRC Meeting Dates – 2018

SRC meetings are held in compliance with Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and also are in compliance with the NJ Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6.

The public is invited to all meetings, which will start at 9:30 a.m. on the following dates:

- ◆ February 2
- ◆ April 20
- ◆ June 1
- ◆ October 5
- ◆ December 7

Service Centers and Facilities

For a complete description of CBVI services, please visit the web site at <http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

153 Halsey Street, 6th Floor
P.O. Box 47017, Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 648-3333 Fax: (973) 648-7364

Dr. Bernice Davis, Acting Executive Director
bernice.davis@dhs.state.nj.us

Amanda Gerson, Coordinator of Vocational Rehabilitation
and Transition Services
amanda.gerson@dhs.state.nj.us

Eva Scott, Director of Blindness Education
eva.scott@dhs.state.nj.us

Elizabeth DeShields, Coordinator of Independent
Living Services
elizabeth.deshields@dhs.state.nj.us

NEWARK SERVICE CENTER (NSC):

153 Halsey Street, 5th Floor, Newark, NJ 07101
Phone: (973) 648-2111 Fax: (973) 648-7674

Manager: John Reiff
john.reiff@dhs.state.nj.us

FREEHOLD SERVICE CENTER (FSC):

100 Daniels Way, Freehold Township, NJ 07728
Phone: (732) 308-4001 Fax: (732) 308-4104

Managers: John Reiff & Jack Thompson
john.reiff@dhs.state.nj.us
jack.thompson@dhs.state.nj.us

CHERRY HILL SERVICE CENTER (CHSC):

2201 Rt. 38 East, Suite 600, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
Phone: (856) 482-3700 Fax: (856) 482-3770

Manager: Jack Thompson
jack.thompson@dhs.state.nj.us

ATLANTIC CITY SERVICE CENTER (ACSC)

1300 Atlantic Avenue, 3rd Floor, Atlantic City, NJ 08401
Phone: (609) 441-3074 Fax: (609) 441-3079

DEAF-BLIND SERVICES:

153 Halsey Street, 6th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 648-7504 Fax: (973) 648-7674

Supervisor: Ed Sroczynski
edward.sroczynski@dhs.state.nj.us

JOSEPH KOHN TRAINING CENTER:

130 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08903
Phone: (732) 937-6363 Fax: (732) 247-6628

Manager: Del Basha
delavar.basha@dhs.state.nj.us

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES – NEW JERSEY:

Joseph Kohn Training Center
130 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08903
Phone: (732) 937-6363 Fax: (732) 247-6628

Manager: Deacon Truesdale
napoleon.truesdale@dhs.state.nj.us

GEORGE F. MEYER INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE CENTER:

375 McCarter Highway, Newark, NJ 07114
Phone: (973) 648-2547

Manager: Christine Hinton
christine.hinton@dhs.state.nj.us

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. NJ DHS does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. The NJ DHS:

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as: Qualified sign language interpreters
- Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as: Qualified interpreters
- Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact Bonny E. Fraser, Esq., or if you believe that the NJ DHS has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance at: 222 South Warren Street, PO. Box 700, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0700; phone: 609-777-2026; fax: 609-633-9610; Bonny.Fraser@dhs.state.nj.us.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building Washington, D.C. 20201 1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD) Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.



**New Jersey Department of Human Services
Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**