



## Issue 3 2013

### *InSights*

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## ABVI & Goodwill Open Expanded Campus

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes officially opened the organizations' newly expanded campus on South Clinton Avenue in Rochester's South Wedge neighborhood to the public on September 17, 2013.

"Nothing has been more exciting for everyone at ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes than seeing this dream of a new, expanded campus come to life," said Gidget Hopf, president and CEO.

The dream Hopf described started to become a reality in 2009 with the opening of a 75-seat LEED Gold Certified Contact Center. It came to fruition this year with the completion of the 30,000 square foot facility expansion that houses ABVI's new state-of-the-art Vision Rehabilitation Center and world class Low Vision Clinic.

"While we dreamed of a beautiful structure, we could not have envisioned some of the special features that add to the character of the new facility," said Hopf.

Inside the new Vision Rehabilitation Center, individuals who are blind or visually impaired can utilize the new, expanded kitchen training space, children's area, and adaptive technology rooms. The InSight Shop and Optical Shop have also expanded and contain a more robust offering of products for people who are blind or visually impaired. The Low Vision Clinic expansion included adding more space for exam rooms so that people with significant vision loss can receive top-level low vision care. According to Hopf, the expansion into the new facility solidifies ABVI's position as a Center of Excellence where experienced staff provide comprehensive vision rehabilitation and support services to a growing population of individuals

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## ABVI Launches Career Explorers Program

ABVI's first-ever Career Explorers program launched in August giving youth who are blind or visually impaired between the ages of 11 and 13 a basic idea of the jobs people do that impact their everyday lives.

During the weeklong program, four participants were continually on the move to learn about what people do in our community, visiting places such as Animatus (animation studio), the Public Market, the Seneca Park Zoo, Jay's Diner, WXXI, Movies 10, Leo's Bakery, and Crust Pizza Kitchen. They

also learned about careers in criminal justice from a Rochester City Police Officer, and how to meet the challenges faced by someone who is blind or visually impaired in college and the work place from ABVI's Director of Advocacy and Consumer Affairs, Rene Latorre. Finally, our talent specialist discussed the essentials of a good interview.

The kids had a lot of fun throughout the week and learned valuable lessons from owning your own business, to broadcasting a radio show, to running a movie at the movie theater.

## TEAM ABVI Picture Perfect in PhotoFinish 5K

This year ABVI participated in the George Eastman House PhotoFinish 5K for the first time. The 44 members of TEAM ABVI joined more than 1,000 participants in this large event that supports numerous local nonprofits. These ABVI supporters, with the help of a generous sponsorship from Leo J. Roth Corporation, raised more than \$7,000, making ABVI a top five fundraising nonprofit.

ABVI is grateful not only to the Leo J. Roth Corporation for their support, but also to Advance Optical Sales and Rochester Optical for forming

teams on our behalf and especially to those individuals who walked, ran, and fundraised

on our behalf. We even had one team member who held a "virtual walk" and solicited friends and neighbors even though she wouldn't be able to be on the course the day of the event! Also thanks to local artist Joe Guy Allard who loaned us a tent so our team could enjoy post-5K treats out of the rain.



## New Campus – ABVI is Local Center of Excellence

*Continued from page 1...*

who are blind or visually impaired and their families throughout the Greater Rochester region.

"We are proud to be a local Center of Excellence with the goal of progressing to one that has significant influence on a regional and national scale," said Hopf.

In addition to the increased space for the Vision Rehabilitation Center and the Low Vision Clinic, the campus expansion includes a new parking lot between the new facility and the Contact Center that increases safety for individuals being served at the Vision Rehabilitation Center, as they no longer

need to cross South Clinton Avenue to enter the building. Other additions to the campus include: a campus marker at the corner of South Clinton Avenue and Comfort Street; and, upgrades to the Goodwill store parking lot and perimeter fence.

"Like most successful projects, this one was the result of an amazing team effort," said Hopf. "We could not be where we are today with the dedication and hard work of our Centennial Campaign volunteers, the hundreds of donors who supported us, and the many professionals who have worked together to design and build this outstanding campus."

## Every Kid Has a Vision of What Their Future Will Be



### Jessica is no exception.

This outgoing 11-year old wants to direct movies. And even though she is visually impaired, she has a wonderful way of seeing the world and she wants to share that with everyone. At ABVI, we want to give kids like Jessica who are blind or visually impaired a chance to see their future any way they want!

Jessica has optic atrophy. She's been receiving services from ABVI since she was 5 years old. Her mother, who also has optic atrophy, always told Jessica she could be anything she wanted to be. And Jessica is determined that nothing is going to slow her down!

With an infectious smile and laugh, Jessica brightens the world for those around her. She's been a cheerleader since she was four. She loves making videos with her friends and sharing them with people around the world. And she really loves roller coasters.

Jessica feels that ABVI's children's programs like Summer Sizzle and Winter Chill have given her much more confidence. This confidence helps her when other kids make fun of her for being visually impaired or when she wonders why she has to be

visually impaired when the other kids aren't. She says that what she loves about ABVI's programs is having the opportunity to meet other kids who are blind or visually impaired because they can understand what she struggles with sometimes. And that's an important part of what ABVI does—help those who are blind or visually impaired realize they are not alone and there is still so much they can accomplish.

This past year, Jessica took part in a new program called Career Explorers. Designed to broaden the horizons of kids who are blind or visually impaired, this program gave participants a chance to meet people and learn about careers that affect their lives every day: firefighters, broadcasters, entrepreneurs, musicians, animators, police officers, and farmers. It gave Jessica a wonderful insight into the opportunities available to her when she gets older.

Success stories like Jessica's couldn't happen without generous support from people like you and we're so grateful for what you've done for us. Please consider making a gift today so we can keep helping kids like Jessica have a clear vision of what they want their future to hold.

# NDEAM Highlights Power of Empowerment

So many of us take our jobs and careers for granted; we go through our morning routine, head off to work and feel gratified for the work that we do while earning a living to support ourselves and our families. Unfortunately, this aspect of the American Dream is unattainable for a significant portion of our population. A disproportionate percentage of people with disabilities who want to work, continue to be unemployed. Unemployment of people with disabilities is a complex issue. It is extremely frustrating when stereotypes keep employers from opening up opportunities for those who want to work.

ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes employs hundreds of people who are blind or have other disabilities. Many of these people tell us of the difficulty they faced in finding or keeping employment in for-profit companies. They tell us that being part of the ABVI and Goodwill team has changed their lives. The work that our employees engage in exemplifies our mission: to prepare and empower people who are blind or have other disabilities or barriers to independence for self-sufficiency and contributions to their families and communities. Through their work, our team members are providing vital services to our community, state and country. Whether sewing military uniforms for our men and women in the Coast Guard or Air Force, or saving lives through 2-1-1/LIFE LINE, the essential work they do is both gratifying and meaningful.

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This is a national

campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Preparing people with disabilities for employment and providing employment opportunities is what ABVI has been dedicated to for all of its 102 years.



While we continue to seek new and innovative ways to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other barriers in light of challenges like sequestration and the recent government shutdown, which adversely impacted our business, we also believe it is important to help change the minds and hearts of employers. Educating employers about the abilities of people with disabilities and working with them to hire the people we serve is an important part of our strategy to fulfill our mission.

Dr. Edgar Helms the founder of Goodwill Industries stated in 1941: "Friends of Goodwill, be dissatisfied with your work until every handicapped and unfortunate person in your community has an opportunity to develop to his fullest usefulness and enjoy a maximum of abundant living." His words guide us every single day, and that is why we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.



# Our Wish List

The kindness and generosity of our donors help us to offer the best and most up-to-date services possible. The following is a list of much needed items that are not covered by ABVI's budget. To donate funds to purchase any of these items, or to donate the items themselves, please contact Tracy Schleyer, CFRE, at [ttschleyer@abvi-goodwill.com](mailto:ttschleyer@abvi-goodwill.com) or (585) 697-5780.

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## **iPad security locks: \$100/each**

Sadly, even though we have security protocols in place, ABVI is not immune to the phenomenon known as "Apple picking," which refers to the theft of popular Apple products. These locks and tethers would allow us to still instruct the people we serve on the latest technology while keeping the devices secured.

## **3 copies of the software program Talking Typer: \$89/each**

This is an interactive program used by our Career & Training staff to teach essential keyboard skills.

## **Digital subscription to the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle: \$156**

This resource would allow Career Development Specialists to stay current on area employers, employment opportunities as well as local labor trends.

## **Nikon D3000 Digital SLR Camera: \$329**

This camera would allow our staff to capture moments from recreation programs and document and share the work that we do.

## **iPad Mini Wi-Fi 16GB: \$329**

This is the newest iPad product from Apple. With this, we can demonstrate the most up-to-date technologies for those we serve.

## **New examination stool with a back for Project Eye Care: \$400**

This will be used by Project Eye Care staff, who conduct free eye exams at local community health centers for those who lack insurance or meet other income guidelines.

## **Mac Mini with OS X Server: \$999**

This server would enable us to configure the devices we use for programs like TechBridge on a single account, allowing us to operate more efficiently at a lower cost.

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## A Win-Win Situation: Stock Transfer Benefits ABVI and You

### **By Tracy Schleyer, CFRE, Vice President of Development**

Take stock – and give it! Every year, many people take stock of their financial affairs. If your year-end gift to ABVI-Goodwill includes securities, you may discover surprising tax advantages available to you. If you donate appreciated stock outright, you may avoid capital gains taxes entirely.

For example, if you have a stock that has appreciated from \$200 to \$2,000, and you sell it, you will owe capital gains taxes on \$1,800.

However, if you choose to give the stocks to ABVI, neither you nor the Association owes the taxes. Moreover, you make a \$2,000 donation for an out-of-pocket cost of \$200, for which you can claim a charitable tax deduction of \$2,000. You win by paying less tax, and ABVI wins through the generosity of your tax-deductible gift.

Transferring stock can be as easy as placing a phone call. For information on how to make a gift of stock to ABVI-Goodwill, please contact me at 585-697-5780 or [ttschleyer@abvi-goodwill.com](mailto:ttschleyer@abvi-goodwill.com).

A memorial or honorary gift is a wonderful way to celebrate special occasions, honor a loved one, or pay tribute to the memory of family members or friends. Many generous people have found a way to express their caring spirit while helping to ensure the success of ABVI. As a thank you for your gift, ABVI will list your name and the names of those who you are honoring in our newsletter. We'll also send a note acknowledging your gift according to your wishes. For more information about making a memorial or honorary gift donation, please contact ABVI's Development Department at (585) 697-5713.

Thank you to the following friends who have made contributions from July 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013.

*Editor's note:* Mr. Donald Alloco's name was omitted from last issue's list of Centennial Campaign donors. We deeply regret the omission and are grateful for Mr. Alloco's support.

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***In memory of Anne H. Yanicky***

Karen Woch

## President & Chairman’s Lunch Honors Exceptional Donors

At the President and Chairman’s Luncheon we thank our supporters and present awards to those who have helped ABVI in exceptional ways. This year’s event focused on donors as the foundation giving ABVI the sustainability, resources, and innovation to advance our unique entrepreneurial philanthropic enterprise model.

### The Foresight Award

recognizes individuals whose generosity demonstrates a dedication to ABVI’s mission and to preserving the agency’s future. President/ CEO Gidget Hopf highlighted the commitment of Philip and Beverly Gelsomino, who not only generously supported the construction of our new Vision Rehabilitation Center, but also funded less glamorous efforts, like the purchase of cement paint for a warehouse.



“One of the true focal points of our mission, the Vision Rehabilitation Center, allows us to provide critical services to those facing loss of vision, and with our new state-of-the-art space, we can provide unparalleled support to the thousands who turn to us every year,” said Gidget, “Without Philip and Beverly Gelsomino, we might not have been able to bring this wonderful new space to fruition.”

Board Chair Marty Quinn noted that the **Visionary Award**, “honors an individual or organization

that has supported ABVI in promoting its mission.” The Lavelle Fund for the Blind has surpassed that aim by helping to extend our mission into the future. Through a substantial grant, ABVI now provides individuals who have suffered

a neurological impairment, such as a stroke, and have an accompanying visual impairment, with neurological vision rehabilitation services.



### The Community Partner Award

goes to a recipient who has helped to carry out our mission in the community. ABVI honored Macy’s for the multiple ways they support ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes. “Through a generous grant this year, Macy’s supported our LifeSkillz program. This week-long residential program for teens who are blind or visually impaired provides experience and learning opportunities in a safe, supportive environment that simulates independent living,” said Gidget, adding “The lasting impact of this program on its participants cannot be measured in words and we are so grateful to Macy’s for their support.”



“Thanks to our award winners and to all of you for being part of our vital work and for believing and knowing that we make a difference,” Gidget concluded.



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