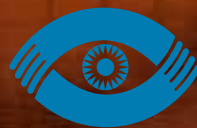


Thank You



**Blind & Vision Rehabilitation
Services of Pittsburgh**

Annual Report 2011

Photo courtesy of Timothy R. Hall

Cover photo by Timothy R. Hall, former client: Looking east from Downtown Pittsburgh at the sun rising above the Birmingham Bridge and, in the distance, over Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh.

As the sun rises on a new day for our clients, they say “Thank You” —a phrase that is always appreciated.

At BLIND AND VISION REHABILITATION SERVICES OF PITTSBURGH, we, in turn, say “Thank You” to our clients, whose determination is ever inspiring.

And we both say “Thank You” to the donors listed in this annual report whose support allows us to help our clients.

**Changing the lives of persons with vision loss
and other disabilities by fostering independence
and individual choice.**

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Letter from the President & Board Chairman

2011 was a year of great challenges, triumphs, and opportunities for BVRs. For the first time in many years, the organization ended the fiscal year with a surplus instead of a deficit. This would not have been possible without the support of volunteers and donors like you. When considering our theme for BVRs's 2011 annual report, it only made sense that it would be "Thank You."

The current economic conditions and constant threat of funding cuts make it difficult to operate a nonprofit organization today. The Board of Directors and staff at BVRs realize that we are very lucky to have the long-term and wide-spread donor support that we receive. We know that this level of support is not common across nonprofit organizations and we are very grateful for each dollar that is donated and every hour of service provided to help advance our mission.

In addition to our incredible donor base, we are blessed to have two auxiliaries that provide support to BVRs annually. The women who belong to St. Lucy's Auxiliary and The Auxiliary, BVRs have dedicated themselves to raising funds for our organization and helping out in many other ways throughout the year. In 2011, the two organizations contributed a combined total of \$133,387 to BVRs to help support our mission. The members give of themselves personally and financially through their involvement with each of these auxiliaries.

Additionally, we are so thankful for the many volunteers who support our programs with their time throughout the year. If we did not have the hundreds of volunteers who serve BVRs annually, we would not be able to offer many of the current services to our clients. Our volunteers not only give of their time but often contribute their own money through transportation costs and covering the cost of tickets for events. We often hear from program participants that they are especially grateful for our volunteers.

Although we are so blessed to receive support from all of the groups mentioned, we continue to experience funding cuts that threaten the ability to operate our programs. Continued support from each of these groups, as well as new individuals, will be imperative to our future growth and development.

BVRs changes the lives of persons with vision loss and other disabilities by fostering independence and individual choice. This charge is a very important one and we get the opportunity to positively affect thousands of people's lives because of each and every one of your efforts. We recognize that we cannot do this alone. From the bottom of our hearts, "Thank You." With your continued support, BVRs will have the opportunity to assist thousands of individuals toward reaching their goals and gaining independence as we move into the future.



Erika Arbogast
President



Michael A. Romano
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erika Arbogast".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Romano".

BLIND AND VISION REHABILITATION SERVICES OF PITTSBURGH

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2011 AND 2010

	2011	2010
Unrestricted Net Assets:		
Support and revenues:		
Service income	\$ 2,126,070	\$ 2,222,149
Sales	1,910,564	1,954,644
Donations and grants	1,426,887	1,311,619
Investment income	516,167	354,613
Realized/unrealized gains (losses)	1,141,462	592,091
Other revenues	81,156	121,183
Net assets released from restrictions	144,389	176,836
Total support and revenues	7,346,695	6,733,135
Expenses:		
Program services:		
Industries	1,688,677	1,796,101
Rehabilitation	1,317,945	1,668,663
Vocational services	1,025,473	1,166,553
Community and support	307,915	366,356
PBA Products and Services	261,495	143,755
Total program services	4,601,505	5,141,428
Management and general	887,908	988,976
Development	343,940	412,931
Total expenses	5,833,353	6,543,335
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	1,513,342	189,800
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets:		
Donations and grants	36,067	141,186
Net assets released from restriction	(144,389)	(176,836)
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	(108,322)	(35,650)
Permanently Restricted Net Assets:		
Realized/unrealized gains (losses)	500,837	156,503
Change in Net Assets	1,905,857	310,653
Net Assets:		
Beginning of year	13,985,221	13,674,568
End of year	\$ 15,891,078	\$ 13,985,221

Services & Statistics

For 101 years, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh has been a leader in programs and services that enable greater independence for people of all ages who are blind, vision impaired or who have other disabilities. Today, with a dedicated staff and hundreds of faithful volunteers, we specialize in:

LOW VISION REHABILITATION PROGRAM After a comprehensive examination, our specially trained optometrist prescribes optical aids, ranging from hand-held magnifiers to electronic devices, designed to maximize remaining eyesight. Occupational therapists then train our students on the use of the aids and how they can help with daily activities like reading, watching television or even painting.

REHABILITATION

PROGRAMS - Individuals served in 2011

• Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training	35
• Low Vision	557
• Access Technology Center	108
• Career & Community Adjustment	12
• Community Based Training	33

PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT TO BLINDNESS TRAINING In this comprehensive residential program, our students learn to manage their lives with vision loss. Instruction is provided in communication, techniques of daily living, household arts including safe cooking, orientation and mobility, exercise, sensory training, and more.

DEAF BLIND PROGRAM Our deaf blind program is one of only a few in the United States in which students are trained in personal adjustment to deaf-blindness and job readiness. Working with both the student and the employer, the goal is to assist individuals in attaining competitive employment.

NEW OUTLOOK PROGRAM Classes and training in a variety of adaptive skills and techniques for seniors and others who are vision impaired are offered one day each week for six classes. Students learn to accomplish many tasks—like cooking—safely in their homes.

COMPUTER ACCESS TECHNOLOGY Students learn a variety of accessible technologies, including screen-reading software, screen magnification, Braille displays and other computer technology, in our state-of-the-art center. Students range from beginners to career professionals.

YOUTH PROGRAMS BVRS offers a school-to-work program that prepares young people who are blind or vision impaired for employment. A mentoring component matches each student with an adult professional who is blind or vision impaired. In the summer, a five-week residential program provides work experiences and independence training to students 16-21, along with fun evening and weekend activities.



VOCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES Job coaches offer individualized services to job seekers and employers. Students learn job-seeking skills, including resume writing and interviewing. Also offered are job shadowing, vocational testing, career exploration, mentoring, community-based work assessments, and more.

STRUCTURED DAY PROGRAMS The common goal of our three structured day programs is to develop, improve and expand life-long learning opportunities for adults with multiple disabilities. We offer three distinct programs for different age groups and abilities.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES - Individuals served in 2011

• Community Transition	17
• Senior Transition	9
• Employment Transition	31
• Employment Support	219

COMMUNITY SERVICES - Individuals served in 2011

• Vision Screening	11,803
• Transportation	56
• Group Training	432
• Information & Referral	926
• Case Management	1,237
• Public Education	1,568

VISION SCREENINGS A team of BVRS staff with the help of nearly 600 volunteers provide free screenings to more than 11,000 preschoolers each year for a variety of conditions, some of which can save a child's sight if caught early. We also offer vision screenings for adults.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES Through this program, qualified people in the community who have vision loss receive transportation and escort service from their homes to their doctor's office, grocery store, bank, post office and other destinations. Staff also help with small household tasks.

PBA INDUSTRIES This manufacturing and assembly division of BVRS employs craftsmen who are blind or vision impaired to create a variety of products for both governmental agencies and private sector businesses. Custom work also is available.

PBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES This BVRS division provides employment for skilled workers with disabilities through contracts for commercial cleaning and other services



BVRS in fiscal year 2011 introduced a new program that helps seniors with vision problems stay in their homes by partnering with Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh. This partnership provides home modifications, counseling, and in-home mobility and blindness training, with the goal of helping Allegheny County seniors remain independent in their homes. Funding is through the United Way of Allegheny County.

Beyond the Numbers

Thank You

We hear it all of the time from our clients: They tell us how thankful they are for Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh, in general, or for a specific BVRs instructor or staff person. But really, we are the ones who are thankful because our clients—in their unique ways—inspire us.

A specific “thank you” goes to former client Timothy R. Hall, who provided the photo on the front cover of this 2011 annual report. Following is his story – he tells it much better than we can:



“I entered those doors on the fourth day of April, 2011, not quite knowing what to expect, those doors being BVRs, located in Homestead, PA. How did I get there, you ask?

“I would like to share a pivotal moment with you. Picture, if you will, a very intimidated man of 6 feet, 6 inches standing in the

health insurance or a job to pay for it. This was after completing a master’s degree in film and digital technology at Chatham University. You see, I am a photographer by profession and I love to take breathtaking images. It did not help that I had actually started getting a little emotional... out of sheer frustration. There I stood, with food in my cart, people shopping all around and I could not see much more than a blur. After squeezing the plastic cart handle until it almost cracked, I left the food cart and exited the store... as gracefully as anyone could under the circumstances. This is the kind of ‘baggage’ I was carrying the day I started my

*I would like to thank the entire staff
and my former dormitory clients at BVRs
for their support during my stay.*

It was an experience I will cherish for the rest of my days.

TIMOTHY R. HALL

dairy section of a local supermarket with a food list in hand. I was having a ‘bad vision’ period that day brought on by a progressive glaucoma condition. I could not see well enough to finish my shopping, having reached this awful intersection by not having

classes at BVRs.

“Now, when one loses contact with ‘that which makes one tick,’ confidence and competence levels drop into the deepest of black holes... so to speak!

It did not help that I had spent months of my life 'hiding' this condition, and as an instructor, I remembered that some of my adult students would tell me they did not want the world to know what they did not know, or what they were unable to do. This presented an interesting set of problems for me. Enter BVRS...

"Not only did I learn Braille, mobility and cooking skills, I created and served a nutritionally balanced meal for 10 people. I also did the cleanup.

"I also learned the dynamics of crossing a busy four-way intersection while using a mobility cane.

"I was also encouraged not to sit in my room alone and to interact with other clients, as this was a dormitory setting. We studied together around the kitchen table on some evenings. They had me watching 'Dancing with the Stars' every Monday and Tuesday night, which is something I would never have done at home on my own. At one point I was voting by telephone! I started learning to embrace this awkward space I found myself in and to start

tearing down the 'walls' that tend to isolate people. I was getting some of my swagger back.

"Where am I now, you ask? Well, I am still searching for employment, which is tough in this job market. It is hard for others to understand that blindness can be incremental. Being visually impaired and pursuing a career in photography do not appear to fit in the same sentence for most. I can still take breathtaking images and teach on the university level, along with a variety of acquired management skills.

"I would like to thank the entire staff and my former dormitory clients at BVRS for their support during my stay. It was an experience I will cherish for the rest of my days. ***BVRS is helping individuals with vision and other impairments to get back in touch with 'what makes them tick'—one client at a time.***"



Timothy R. Hall, pictured with BVRS Board Member Peggy Snavelly, was the speaker at a fall reception for BVRS donors. He also spoke at St. Lucy's Auxiliary to the Blind "Vision of Hope" luncheon last fall, where he received the Auxiliary's Anne Freyvogel Hanna Scholarship.

"There are no words that can express my gratitude to the instructors and staff at BVRs."

Sharol Geisser, a 39-year-old mother of three, is losing her vision to rheumatoid arthritis. She came to Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh last January from her home in East Helena, Montana for our Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training. Why the long trip?

"I researched three other facilities in other parts of the United States, and nothing compares to this place," according to Sharol.



*Thank
You*



"Thank you so much, Tracey, for all of your hard work and being patient with me. I'm so glad I got to be your first client... Thanks for everything."

Marlane Fuhrmann, 19, spent a week last summer at BVRs's Access Technology Center, learning Internet research, word processing, basic Windows concepts, among other technology. Marlane has nystagmus, a vision condition characterized by involuntary eye movement that often results in reduced vision. She is pictured with instructor Tracey Morsek.

⇒ **BVRS Celebrates Centennial**

BVRS celebrated 100 years of service on Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. The Centennial Celebration marked an important milestone for BVRS. The evening highlighted 100 individuals, companies, and organizations who were recognized for their support and dedication...

⇒ **Grant Program Impacts Youth**

A \$50,000, one-year grant from BNY Mellon Foundation enables 20 youth who are blind or visually impaired to participate in expanded and individualized services at Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh...

⇒ **Corporate Cup Ski Race Exceeds Goal**

The 27th annual Corporate Cup Ski Race was held Friday, February 18 at Seven Springs Mountain Resort, with 14 teams and two individuals racing...

⇒ **Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services Fundraiser at SouthSide Works**

Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh's annual "Girls' Night Out" fundraiser was held Thursday, April 14 at SouthSide Works Cinema, 425 Cinema Drive...

⇒ **Age-Related Vision Challenges Explored at May 7 Blindness Awareness Day**

Age-related vision problems—such as macular degeneration, cataracts and glaucoma—and the latest treatments available were the focus of Blindness Awareness Day Saturday, May 7 at the Radisson Hotel in Green Tree...

⇒ **Teenage Volunteers at Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services**

Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh needs teenage volunteers for its summer youth program, which helps teenagers who are blind or vision impaired prepare for college or a career. Teenage volunteers accompany students to places like Kennywood, Pirate baseball games...

⇒ **Tailgate Party Fundraiser at Vodka Distillery**

Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh's annual tailgate party fundraiser was Friday, June 17 at Boyd and Blair Vodka Distillery, Route 8, Glenshaw. Pittsburgh native Dave Wannstedt, newly appointed NFL Buffalo Bills assistant head coach, was the host...

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*deceased

THE CHUCK NOLL ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE SOCIETY

Chuck Noll turned the Pittsburgh Steelers into a winning dynasty. When he retired from the Steelers, he joined the Board of Directors of The Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind, noting the similarity between his approach to success in football and the agency's success in rehabilitation. When the Guild consolidated with Pittsburgh Blind Association, Chuck Noll became the first Chairman of the Board of the new agency, now called Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh.

The current board and staff developed the Chuck Noll Road to Independence Society in order to pay tribute to Mr. Noll and to honor agency donors who have joined him as leaders in supporting the agency. Members of this prestigious group pledge unrestricted gifts of at least \$1,000 per year for five years. All members of the Chuck Noll Road to Independence Society also are members of the Visionary Society.

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Visionary Society members contribute \$1,000 or more in a single year in unrestricted gifts for which no benefits from a special event were received.

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Community Groups

The Andy Warhol Museum
Archdiocese of Washington
The Auxiliary, BVRS
Beth El Congregation
Bethel Park Lioness Club
Bethel Park Lions Club
Boston Greenock Mt. Vernon Lions Club
Brentwood Lions Club
Camp Kon-O-Kwee/Spenser
Carnegie Museums
Carnegie Science Center
Catholic Youth Association
Central Elizabeth Lions Club
Charleroi Lions Club
Chestnut Ridge Lions Club
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
Clairton Lions Club
Delta Gamma Alumni
 South Hills Chapter
Delta Gamma Pittsburgh Alumni Chapter
Diocese of Pittsburgh
Dormont Women's Club
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Ewing Hills Preschool
Family Services of
 Western Pennsylvania
Forest Hills Lions Club
Glassport Lions Club
Good Shepherd Christian Preschool
Goodwill of Southwestern PA
Hickory Lions Club
Homestead District Lions Club
Independent Order of Odd Fellows
 Grand Lodge of PA
Insight Services For Visually Impaired
Jefferson Hills Lions Club
Lions Club District 14B
McKeesport Lions Club
Monaca Center Lions Club
Monroeville Lions Club
Mt. Lebanon Lions Club
Mt. Lebanon School District
New Alexandria Lions Club
North Central Sight Services
Oakmont Lions Club
Phipps Conservatory
Pitcairn Lions Club
Pittsburgh Lions Club
Pittsburgh Playhouse at
 Point Park University
Pittsburgh Public Theatre
Pittsburgh Regional History Center
Pleasant Hills Lions Club

Praise Christian Day Care
Preschool Activity Learning Shop
Sounds of Pittsburgh Chorus
South Fayette Township School District
South Park Lions Club
St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin School
St. Lucy's Auxiliary
St. Peters UCC Sunday School
St. Thomas à Becket Church
St. Vincent De Paul Society
Teamsters Local #211 Members
Tarentum Lions Club
Trinity Tower Preschool
University of Pittsburgh
Upper St. Clair Lions Club
Wallace Memorial
 Presbyterian Church, USA
Wally Byam Caravan Club --
 Al-Mon-O Unit
West Mifflin Lions Club
West Penn Hospital
Western PA Trial Lawyers Association
Western Pennsylvania School for
 Blind Children
Westminster Nursery School
Whitehall Community Lions Club
Wilmerding Lions Club

Businesses

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A. Martini & Co.
Allegheny Ophthalmic and
 Orbital Assoc., Inc.
American Eagle Outfitters, Inc.
Anker Company, Inc.
Aramark
Associates in Ophthalmology
Avalotis Corporation
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Bechtel Plant Machinery, Inc.
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BNY Mellon Community Partnership
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Brimmeier & Associates
Bruster's Ice Cream
Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney P.C.
Burchick Construction Company
C & J Grocery, Co. DBA
 Ligonier Giant Eagle
Calgon Carbon Corporation

Cambridge Investments
Capital Retirement Plan Services
Carabella
Casa D'Oro Jewelers, Inc.
Castriota Chevrolet, Inc.
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Chon Resources
Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania
Clarion Ford Mercury
Coca Cola, N.A.
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Confluence
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Crowne Plaza
Dave & Buster's
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Detroit Switch, Inc.
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Eat'n Park Hospitality Group
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Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Everett & Hurite Ophthalmic Association
Excela Health
Eye Physicians & Surgeons, Ltd
Fairmont Pittsburgh
Fazio Mechanical Services, Inc.
First National Bank of Pennsylvania
Fort Pitt Capital Group
Franklin Pharmacy & Health Care, Inc.
Frito-Lay, Inc.
Gateway Financial
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Global-Pak, Inc.
Gordon Terminal Service
Gove Group, Inc
Greco Gas, Inc.
Greer Industries, Inc.
Hard Rock Cafe
Henderson Brothers, Inc.
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Hinkel-Hofmann
Hoffman Electric, Inc.
Holiday Valley Ski Resort
Howard Hanna Real Estate Services
Huntington National Bank
HVL LLC
I. P. Enterprises, LTD.
IBM Employee Services Center
IKON Office Solutions
Improv
ISS Facility Services
John Hancock Financial Services
Kennywood

Donations listed in this report were made during fiscal year 2011, which is July 1, 2010 -

14 June 30, 2011. Donations made after this date will be recognized in next year's annual report.

Kress Brothers Builders Inc.
 La Perla
 Landmark Event Staffing Services
 LANXESS Corporation
 Latrobe Specialty Steel
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 Lennon Smith Souleret Engineering
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 Foundation
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 Three Rivers Combined
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 United Way of Allegheny County
 United Way of Central Virginia
 United Way of Southeastern PA
 United Way of Southwestern PA
 United Way Valley of the Sun
 W.I. Patterson Charitable Fund
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