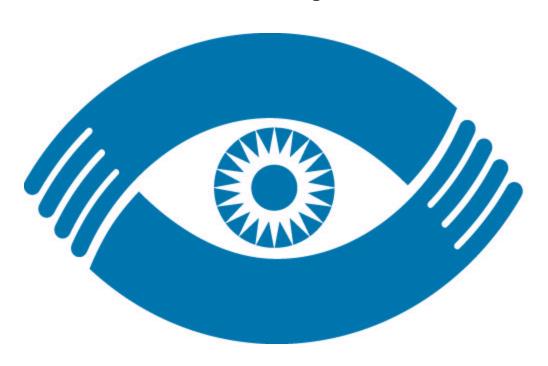
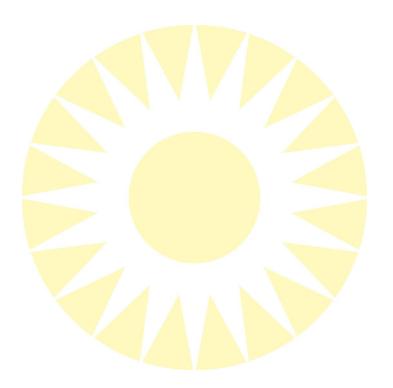


Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh



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

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etter from The President and The Board Chairman

2010, with its challenges and opportunities, has certainly been a year to

remember – it was the year that Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh marked its 100th anniversary.

While BVRS experienced many difficult changes in 2010, the agency remained resilient and dedicated to our mission. The staff continued to serve our clients with passion,



Erika Arbogast President

love, and individualized attention despite losing President Stephen Barrett to cancer in April 2010. At a time when many of them were hurting, staff members funneled their pain into care and compassion for the individuals that we serve.

Because of this care and compassion, 10,281 preschoolers were screened for potentially life-altering eye diseases, 37 individuals who were newly blind or experiencing vision loss learned how to be more independent through our Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training, and 252 youth and adults with disabilities learned skills to help them secure employment.

Although we continue to face funding cuts and changes in service delivery methods, this is the time to think innovatively and proactively. We are en-



Michael A. Romano Chairman

gaged in a strategic plan for the future so that we can continue to weather difficult economic times. This process will help to ensure that we are effectively and efficiently providing the most needed programs to our clients.

We are blessed to have dedicated board members, volunteers,

employees, and donors that provide both time and financial support to the organization. Without these giving individuals, the agency could not have endured the last 100 years. We are extremely grateful to these individuals for the assistance that they provide to the agency and pledge to steward their dollars in the most effective way.

We are excited about the future and for the opportunities that will arise out of challenging times. The theme of our 2010 annual report is "100 Years of Vision." By studying our past and updating our current programs to meet the needs of consumers, we will ensure that Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh continues to flourish in the next 100 years of service to our community.

Mulael Oxomer

4 100 Years of Vision

BLIND AND VISION REHABILITATION SERVICES OF PITTSBURGH

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2010 AND 2009

		2010		2009	
Unrestricted Net Assets:	-				
Support and revenues:					
Service income	\$	2,222,149	\$	2,250,274	
Sales		1,954,644		1,868,941	
Donations and grants		1,311,619		1,467,845	
Investment income		354,613		612,817	
Realized/unrealized gains (losses)		592,091		(1,576,429)	
Other revenues		121,183		46,034	
Net assets released from restrictions		176,836	S	249,823	
Total support and revenues		6,733,135		4,919,305	
Expenses:					
Program services:					
Industries		1,796,101		1,730,934	
Rehabilitation		1,668,663		1,890,093	
Vocational services		1,166,553		1,253,506	
Community and support		366,356		428,446	
PBA Products and Services		143,755		48,011	
Total program services		5,141,428		5,350,990	
Management and general		988,976		1,215,494	
Development		412,931		362,413	
Total expenses		6,543,335		6,928,897	
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets		189,800		(2,009,592)	
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets:					
Donations and grants		141,186		1,134,826	
Net assets released from restriction	-	(176,836)		(249,823)	
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets		(35,650)		885,003	
Permanently Restricted Net Assets:					
Realized/unrealized gains (losses)		156,503	3	(797,736)	
Change in Net Assets		310,653		(1,922,325)	
Net Assets:					
Beginning of year	-	13,674,568		15,596,893	
End of year	\$	13,985,221	\$	13,674,568	

ervice Statistics

Each year, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh provides programs and services that enable greater independence for thousands of people with vision loss. BVRS training and employment services help clients to resume their lives, enjoy hobbies, continue working and care for themselves and their families.

COMMUNITY SERVICES include Preschool Vision Screening, Transportation Services, Group Training, Information and Intake, Case Management and Public Education.

REHABILITATION PROGRAMS offer Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training, Low Vision, Computer Access Technology, Career and Community Adjustment, College Preparation and Community Based Training.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES include Community, Senior and Employment Transition, along with Employment Support for adults and teens.

BVRS accomplishes all of these services with its dedicated staff and hundreds of faithful volunteers. Below are the numbers of individuals served in 2010.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Vision Screening 10,281
- Transportation
 55
- Group Training 195
- Information & Intake 1,065
- Case Management 2.036
- Public Education 2.251

REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

- Personal Adjustment to Blindness
 37
- Low Vision 514
- Access Technology Center
 131
- Career & Community Adjustment
- College Prep
- Community Based Training

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

- Community Transition
 - 18
- Senior Transition
 - 8
- Employment Transition
- Employment Support

ne Hundred-Year History

In 2010, we have been celebrating the 100th anniversary of one of Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh's founding agencies, the Pittsburgh Blind Association (PBA). PBA was incorporated in 1910 to prevent blindness and to provide jobs for people with vision loss.

At the same time we've been commemorating the rich history of the Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind, BVRS' other founding agency that was incorporated in 1959 to teach rehabilitation techniques to vision-impaired clients.

The work of both agencies—
consolidated in 1997 to become BVRS—
has led to greater independence for
thousands of people with vision loss
who, due to training and/or employment services through BVRS, have been
able to resume their lives, enjoy hobbies, continue working and care for
themselves and their families.

The story of the agencies that became BVRS began 100 years ago when immigration was booming and rapidly expanding industrialization was fraught with unsafe conditions. For workers who were disabled or blinded on the job, the choices were few.

An estimated 7,000 blind adults lived in Pennsylvania and no social safety nets existed: no job retraining, no workers' compensation, no social security, and no welfare. Injured workers relied on the kindness of their families or begged in the streets to survive.

At the same time, preventable blindness was growing rapidly. A leading cause of

this was ophthalmia neonatorum, a condition that newborns contracted when exposed to harmful bacteria in the birth canal. Few people knew that a



few drops of silver nitrate placed in a baby's eyes would kill the bacteria and prevent blindness.

Three private citizens stepped up to confront these problems. Phoebe J. Ruslander, a prominent Pittsburgh community leader, responded to the call of her organization, the National Council of Jewish Women, who sought to address the needs of adults who were blind. William Wightman Blair, a Pittsburgh ophthalmologist, wanted to do something about the growing number of blind people he was seeing in his practice. Thomas McAloney, Superintendent of the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, and his Board of Directors were increasingly concerned about the difficulty that the school's graduates had in finding employment.

From their efforts, the organization that became the Pittsburgh Association for the Blind was founded in 1910 to provide employment to persons who were blind, and to promote blindness prevention.

Nearly 50 years later, Father Paul (continued)

One Hundred-Year History (continued)

Lackner learned that the U.S. Army and the Veterans Administration had developed systematic training methods to rehabilitate blinded soldiers. Father Lackner was the Director of the Catholic Guild for the Blind and responsible for transportation and social services for adult Catholics without vision. Under the leadership of Bishop John Wright, a nondenominational reha-

bilitation center called the Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind was formed in 1959 to bring training to blind adults in Pittsburgh. Its mission was *Independence* through Rehabilitation.

With PAB and the Guild, visionimpaired Pittsburghers were well served. Over time, however, the ability to sustain

both agencies became an increasing challenge. In 1997 the Boards of both agencies decided to consolidate the two into one agency that became Pittsburgh Vision Services.



In 2005 the consolidation was completed when the buildings of both agencies were sold and the new agency was renamed Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh. At that time our programs and administration offices were relocated to our current home, the former Homestead Hospital located one mile from the

Waterfront Shopping Center. Our Industries programs were moved to a North Side industrial park where there is easy shipping access and room for growth.

Many thanks to Dr. Richard L. Welsh, former Pittsburgh Vision Services president, for his research for our centennial year.



VRS Today

Since its inception in 1910, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh has nurtured a commitment to enhance the quality of life for persons with vision loss, including those with additional disabilities. This dedication has



established a foundation affording the agency to grow and to meet the community's changing needs with valuable services, effective programs, advanced technology and, ultimately, success stories.

PRESCHOOL VISION SCREENING – BVRS staff with the assistance of a team of up to 800 volunteers, screen more than 10,000 preschoolers every year for a variety of conditions, some of which can save a child's sight if caught early.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES – Through this program, people in the community who have vision loss receive transpor-



tation 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.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION & REFERRAL – BVRS' case managers provide information to clients and their families about BVRS programs, help create individualized treatment plans that include onsite and community services, help clients secure funding, and provide advocacy and support. The information and referral specialists provide information to those who inquire about BVRS' programs and services, and help facilitate en-

COMPUTER ACCESS TECHNOLOGY CEN-

rollment in programs.

TER – Blind and vision impaired instructors teach clients how to use screen reading software, screen magnification, Braille displays, optical character recognition, scanners, file management, CCTVs, and other

(continued)

Today (continued)

computer technology in our state-of-the -art center. Students range from beginners to career professionals.

Low Vision Program – These services are provided to people who have some usable vision. A specially-trained optometrist performs an examination to determine a client's level of vision. The doctor then prescribes optical aids that range from hand-held magnifiers to electronic devices and are designed to maximize any remaining eyesight. Certified Low Vision Therapists or Occupational Therapists then train clients to use the aids for daily tasks.

PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT TO BLINDNESS

TRAINING – This comprehensive immersion program provides instruction in safe cooking, techniques of daily living, communication, orientation and mobility,

exercise, sensory training, leisure time activities and more. The goal is for people with vision loss to develop the skills they need to become as independent as possible.

SUMMER YOUTH PRO-GRAMS – Through the Career and Community Adjustment Program, BVRS students age 16-21 explore a variety of vocations while earning a paycheck. The Summer Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training Program provides instruction in independence techniques, household arts, communication, orientation and mobility, leisure time development, and more.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES –works to match employers who are looking to fill positions with qualified job seekers who have disabilities. The employer is provided with technical supports, consultation and financial incentives. The job seeker is provided with instruction in work readiness skills, individualized job development, on-the-job training, information about accommodations and assistive technology and, in specific cases, follow-up services.



PBA INDUSTRIES -

This manufacturing and assembly division of BVRS employs blind or vision impaired craftsmen to create a variety of products for both public and private sectors. Products include construction safety products, portable highway signs, signage, textiles,

(continued)

Today (continued)

and silk-screened items. Custom work is provided through our contract manufacturing service. The division also provides brooms to support the fundraising efforts of non-profit organizations such as Lions Clubs throughout the country.

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

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT -

This school-to-work program is designed to prepare students for employment. This is accomplished through a variety of services that include job readiness classes, job shadowing, community-based work experiences, mentoring, and job coaching that help students develop the skills they need to secure and retain a job.

COMMUNITY TRANSITION PROGRAM -

This program provides day activities for people with multiple disabilities. The goal is to develop, improve, and expand lifelong learning opportunities through creative and cognitive stimulating activities that include arts and crafts, building and assembly, shape and color sorting, and scheduled outings.



EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION PROGRAM -

This program offers vocational training designed to prepare individuals for competitive employment while they earn a paycheck. We contract with a number of businesses for labeling and sealing envelopes, stapling and collating material, price-tagging items, and re-packaging bulk items into smaller parcels.

SENIOR TRANSITION PROGRAM – This program offers structured and stimulating activities designed to enrich the lives of older adults with disabilities. The highly specialized and individualized services promote independence and self esteem and maintain and enhance the participant's overall physical and emotional well being.



Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh recognizes there are changing needs within the communities we serve. To effectively plan for the future, BVRS must determine what those needs are, the communities in which the needs are most prevalent, and how to administer programs that meet those needs through the provision of quality services.

BVRS is currently reviewing existing programs to ensure they are operating in the most efficient manner and providing the highest quality of service.

Beginning April 2011, BVRS will conduct a needs assessment of Allegheny and surrounding counties to determine the unmet needs for individuals with blindness, vision impairments, and other disabilities. This assessment will serve as the basis for program additions or modifications.

In the meantime, new programs already in the planning stages include:

KEEPING SENIORS SAFE IN THEIR HOMES

- The United Way of Allegheny County is investing more than \$2 million in grants to agencies that will help individuals with disabilities and elderly residents stay in their homes. Through this three-year partnership with Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, BVRS will provide community -based training, caregiver instruction and home modification assistance to more than 1,300 seniors each year,



helping them to remain independent in their homes.

PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND BLIND - BVRS has developed a curriculum to help individuals who are deaf and blind to reach optimal independence through adjustment training, vocational preparation, and ultimately, employment.

Access Technology - BVRS is committed to remaining proactive with its state-of-the-art Access Technology Program, and plans to reach out and train youth through summer camps and weekend events.

MENTORING FOR TEENS - The Insights
Mentoring Program, funded by BNY
Mellon, matches young people ages 1421 who are blind or visually impaired
with a successful and confident adult
who also experiences limited vision. We
want to pair young people with mentors
who have faced and overcome similar
challenges because visual impairment
can be an isolating disability.

The tradition of community service will continue to guide Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.



as of July 1, 2010

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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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BVRS is especially grateful to those individuals who have in the past or have a directive for the future to make a gift to us. One of the easiest ways to make a planned gift is to include a provision in your will. Please discuss this option with your legal advisor when you are writing your will.

Sample wording for a bequest is as follows:

"I give, devise and bequeath to Blind & Vision **Rehabilitation Services of** Pittsburgh, a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation with offices located at 1800 West Street, Homestead, Pennsylvania 15120, county of Allegheny the sum of \$_ be administered by the said Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh for persons with disabilities."

Please contact our Development Director if you have questions concerning a bequest or any other type of planned gift. We are happy to work with your legal and tax advisors to find a vehicle that is mutually beneficial.

Every donation is appreciated. Due to printing costs, however, we regret that we can only acknowledge donations of \$50 and above.

To view this 2010 annual report electronically, please see our website at www.BlindVR.org. In the future, if you prefer to receive publications via e-mail, please notify us at enewsletter@pghvis.org. Thank you.

Helping People Who Are Blind And Vision Impaired Achieve Their Goals



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Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh is a nonprofit agency that serves people who are blind or visually impaired or have other disabilities. The agency is an equal-opportunity employer and service provider and does not discriminate against anyone, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnic background, national origin, or disability.

A copy of the official registration and financial statement may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 800-743-0999.

AFFILIATIONS:

National Accreditation Council, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped, National Industries for the Blind, Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



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