

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."  
Arthur Ashe



EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

# Annual Impact Report

2023

# A Message from Peggy

We were able to provide successful programs and hear several inspiring stories in 2023. All of the life changing experiences could not have been possible without the financial support of so many in our community. Just to do a quick recap:

- We served 131 people with visual impairments in 2023. Provided 792.5 hours teaching our students new skills in how to use their iPhone; computer training; white cane training and daily living skills. Our Volunteers and staff provided 980.5 hours towards our mission.
- We held Health & Wellness workshops for 17 people who are visually impaired and provided 17 kits. They received invaluable information and accessibility tools on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle with topics of physical health, nutrition and exercise, emotional health, financial wellness and safety tips in familiar and unfamiliar surroundings. This was possible through a grant from the King's Daughters Organization.
- We held a Cooking with Confidence workshop for 9 people who are visually impaired and provided 9 kits. They received invaluable information and accessibility tools on how to organize their kitchens, how to cut vegetables safely, how to set a timer for food, how to measure ingredients accurately when they could not see if they had the right measuring cup or spoon, and how to protect themselves from burns and cuts. This was possible through a grant from the Springfield Rotary Foundation.
- We hired a Personal Vision Coach in Decatur to provide programs and services for people in this area who are blind or visually impaired.
- Completed our Tandem Bike Project to provide riding a bike experience for people who are blind or visually impaired. This was possible through donations we received from Randy & Kathy Germeraad Family, the Shudo Kan Karate Club, Evelyn Thomas, SB Insurance and many individuals. Many thanks to the YMCA, Capital Area Career Center, Illinois Assistive Technology, Bike Tek and Capitol Radio Group in helping ECVI achieve a successful outcome.



**Peggy Dyson**  
Executive Director





- Each month, we have Friendship Fridays for our participants to get together to learn from community leaders and go on field trips. The one that sticks out the most to me is the field trip to the YMCA to ride the tandem bikes. Thanks again to Mike Murphy, CEO of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce who was our bike Captain for the day. The group also enjoyed going to Illinois Assistive Technology office to learn about all the amazing devices that are available to people with visual impairments. A Book Club group meets once a month to discuss audio books they have listened to and selected.
- Our Personal Vision Coaches were able to travel to students outside of Springfield through a Traveling PVC grant from the Paul & Jane Ford Family and the Kovach/Steward Families. It is sometimes very difficult for our students to find someone to drive them to the Educational Center.

Looking toward the future, we would like to continue our Health & Wellness Workshops, the Cooking with Confidence Workshops, Friendship Fridays and continue to train on accessibility tools for daily living skills. We will be adding a Tool Time Workshop depending on whether we can find funding in order to provide basic skills and a tool kit with talking devices. For the entire Community, in the month of April, we will hold an art exhibit entitled "What Art Feels Like". We have 20 artists who will display their art so that the visually impaired can touch it and use an app on their phone that will describe what they are feeling.

Our vision is to provide all these services in the Decatur area and other counties surrounding Springfield. In this way, we can bring our programs and services closer to people with visual impairments.

Our Mission is to provide education, training and resources so the visually impaired are able to live safe, independent and fulfilling lives.

**By the  
Numbers!**

**131**  
Students  
served in 2023

**792.5**  
Student learning  
hours in 2023

**980.5**  
Volunteer & Staff  
hours in 2023

# Thank You 4th Quarter Donors!

Shirley Theilen  
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Audrey Roman  
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*Fond Memories*

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF OUR WONDERFUL STUDENTS



*Not Pictured: William Drew, Jr. Richard McChesney Marilyn Preval*