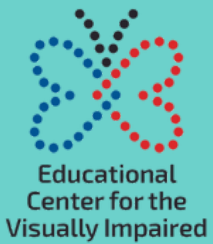




Happy 100th Birthday to ECVI Founder Evelyn Brandt Thomas

EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE
VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Impact Report



FOURTH QUARTER
2023

A Message from Peggy

Our Founder, Evelyn Brandt Thomas, made the decision to establish the Educational Center for the Visually Impaired in September 2014. All of our Impact Reports are a reflection of her heart and vision for people who did not know where to turn to for help in maintaining their independence without the use of their eyesight.

Recently, on August 25th, she celebrated her 100th Birthday with many family members and friends. During the celebration they released 100 butterflies and as you may or may not see on the cover, one butterfly landed on her head as if to say "Happy Birthday Evelyn".

I wanted to take this opportunity to explain in more detail exactly what our students learn here at ECVI. Each new student begins with a meet and greet. If after getting to know each other, the prospective students tells us what they want to learn we develop an Individual Skill Development Plan and set a time and day for them to attend a learning session.

For example, if a student wants to learn how to keep connected with family and friends, we recommend using an iPhone.

- We begin by explaining the External Features of the iPhone.
- We then explain the apps and their use on the home screen.
- We change and customize the settings on their phone to meet their needs. One example is that we change the phone setting to announce all incoming phone calls.



- We add certain apps that we know will benefit them such as the Seeing AI app that will audibly read a document, identify currency, etc.
- We introduce them to the Voice Over Feature that reads what is on the screen for them.
- We set up Siri and explain how Siri can perform many tasks on the phone by using their voice. One example is to have Siri set a timer when cooking or asking Siri what the weather is like in the city you live.
- We make sure their emergency contact information is readily available on their phone by making it a screen saver.
- We teach how to set appointments, enter contact information, send text messages, send emails and delete those items.

This is a small list of items that we teach people who are blind or visually impaired. We have 7 Assessments with a focus and goal that we use to track a student's progress. We use repetitious learning techniques and universal design techniques to ensure they remember each step. We practice this same procedure to teach students how to use a white cane, learn daily living skills, and more. We also provide group learning activities. Please view our most recent videos at your convenience at ecvispringfield.org to learn the impact that ECVI has had on our students.



1923 FUN FACTS

- Yankee Stadium opened in the Bronx
- The Hollywood sign was constructed
- Firestone produced inflatable tires for the first time
- Roy & Walt Disney started The Walt Disney Company
- Clarence Birdseye invented frozen foods
- Time magazine started publishing
- Cecil B. DeMille's silent Ten Commandments premiered
- The Coca-Cola six-pack of bottles was introduced
- Influential musicians included: Al Jolson, Paul Whiteman, Jelly Roll Morton and Bessie Smith

Meet Our New Vision Coach



ECVI is thrilled to announce our expansion into Decatur and the addition of a new Personal Vision Coach, Bobbi Claypool! Bobbi, a retired risk manager, is joining our team with a heart full of compassion and a desire to make a difference. She has bravely taken on the challenge of becoming a personal vision coach for the visually impaired students at ECVI, and we are fortunate to have her on board. With Bobbi's help, we will continue to provide life-changing support and services to those in need. Welcome to the team, Bobbi!

Thank You Donors!

Ann Schonhoff
Evelyn Brandt Thomas
Kristen Berry
Elmer Bruso
Austin & Evie Closet
Janice Williams
Christine Hovey
PEO Chapter EO
Springfield Elks Lodge #158
Golf Committee
Dennis & Peggy Dyson
John Reich
Shudo Kan Karate Club
Wilma Gay
Springfield Mass Transit District
Kovach/Stewart Family Fund
Paul & Jane Ford Family Fund
Craig Drone
Robert McClelland
John Hill

Plus over 120 Donations from Friends & Family in Honor of Evelyn Brandt Thomas' 100th Birthday

To make a donation to the ECVI Memorial Fund or in honor of Evelyn Brandt Thomas call 217-303-9062



Tandem Tales

Who says being visually impaired limits your ability to explore and have fun? At ECVI, we believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the freedom of riding a bike. That's why we now offer tandem bikes for the visually impaired! Thank you to IATP for creating a tactile map of our local trails.

And the best part? Its completely free! Embark on a thrilling adventure with our tandem bikes. Dont let anything hold you back from experiencing the joy of the open trail!

The tandem bikes are for everyone in our community and for those visiting Springfield. Contact the YMCA (to ensure the bikes are available to ride) at springfieldymca.org or call: 217-679-1625.



Enjoy riding every trail together!



By the Numbers!

86

Students served in 2023

552+

Student learning hours in 2023

670+

Mission hours in 2023



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In the Community



Elks Golf Tournament

Thank you to the Elks Lodge #158 Golf Committee for the incredible support they provide through their golf outing so ECVI can continue to provide educational services for the visually impaired. Through their generous donation, many individuals will be able to receive the education and resources they need to thrive.



Friendship Fridays

Your donations to ECVI allow those who are visually impaired to meet with others who are going through similar challenges! Friendship Fridays were created for this very reason. At our most recent Friendship Friday get together, John Hill talked about being a part of the National Visually Impaired Archery team and competing in the Czech Republic.



Zetta's Story

Zetta's life changed when she was diagnosed with macular degeneration, but she didn't let it get her down. Despite struggling with vision loss and feeling isolated after losing her husband in 2015, she found hope and community at ECVI. Zetta has learned new skills and made new friends. Now, with her newfound abilities to use a phone and computer, Zetta feels like she has a new life. She says she is able to navigate the world and enjoy social interaction with others who understand her struggles.