



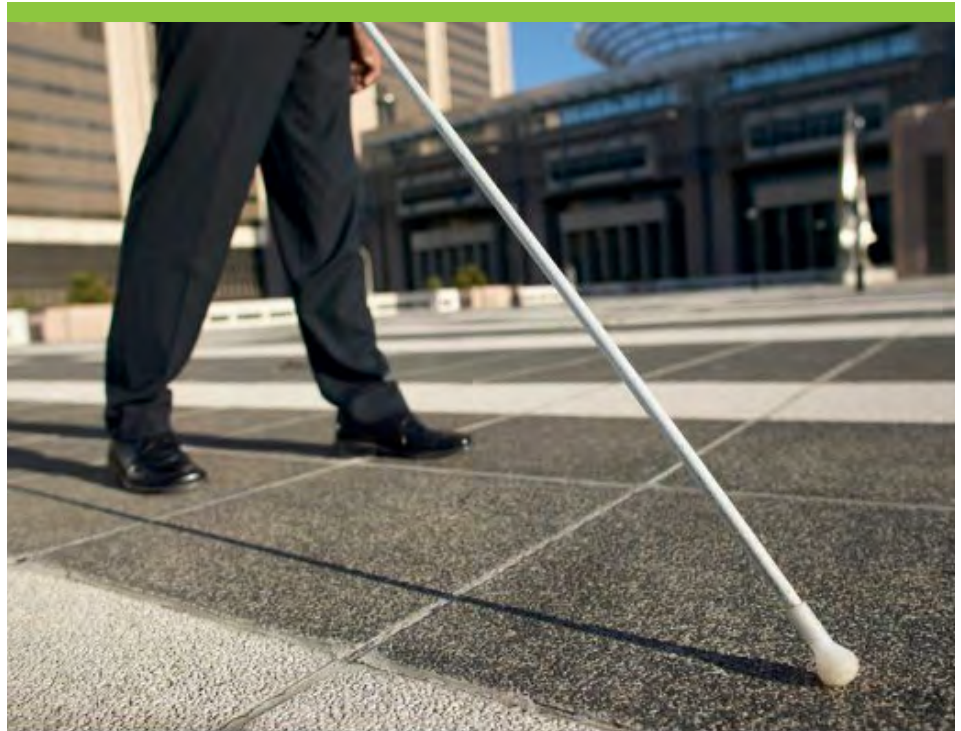
## When is it Time to Get a White Cane?

Determining when to get your first white cane is an important consideration in one's life. Here are some practical factors to assess when thinking about what cane is right for you.

A white cane provides many benefits. Cane users can navigate both familiar and unfamiliar places without relying on a sighted guide to accompany them. They can safely explore their surroundings and make mental maps of walking routes, especially

once they become familiar with the different sounds made when the cane hits various objects. For example, a brick walkway sounds different than a cement sidewalk. A white cane can be helpful indoors especially in situations when lighting or floor texture makes it difficult to navigate a safe walking path. A cane can give you information about the height of stairs, and help distinguish the differences between a shadow, a pet, a puddle or a pot hole as you walk.

"Think about your recent travel experiences," says Jean Kalscheur, Director of Education and Vision Services at the Council. "If people tell me they have missed a step and fallen, run into something, or had people seem to 'jump



A person using a white cane to navigate a city sidewalk. Image provided by: Braille Works

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out' at them because they can no longer use their peripheral vision to see them approach, those are some pretty clear signs to talk about a mobility cane."

The Council recommends reaching out to an orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist for a needs assessment. This person can show you different cane techniques, work on confidence building, and give you practice navigating indoor and outdoor spaces.

"I always provide a Functional Visual Assessment," says Tim Bauman, an O&M Specialist in Southwestern Wisconsin. "If people cannot see farther than 100 feet, I advise they get a cane to show others that they are losing their vision."

If you are in the market for a white cane, an O&M specialist can help you figure out the correct length to get. This person can demonstrate how to use your cane and help you find a cane and cane tips to fit your lifestyle.

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"It is important to know how to switch out the tips, because you might use a different tip depending on how and where you travel," says Steve McAuliff, O&M Specialist at Vision Forward in Milwaukee. "If the majority of your travel is indoors, the pencil tip is great because it gives lots of feedback. It does have the tendency to get stuck in sidewalk cracks,

though. A marshmallow tip is a more in-between cane tip, because it can get stuck sometimes, but not as much as the pencil tip. The roller ball tip rolls over everything so it does not get stuck, but it provides the least amount of feedback. Which tip you use really depends on your preference."

The Council provides a free white cane to people who are blind or visually impaired in Wisconsin every 24 months. If you would like to try a white cane, visit the Council's Sharper Vision Store at 754 Williamson Street in Madison. We are open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you would like to order a cane or find an O&M specialist, call the Council at **800-783-5213**.

The Council does not receive any publicly funded money; all of the canes are provided through generous donations to the White Cane Program. Donations are appreciated to cover the cost and continue the program for others. For the full White Cane Policy, visit **[WCBlind.org/what-we-do](http://WCBlind.org/what-we-do)**. ■

# Letter from the CEO/Executive Director



Denise Jess

Autumn is my favorite season of the year. It is a time of harvest from our gardens and farm fields. The weeks are filled with chillier mornings, the crunch of leaves under our feet and a crispness in the air. Both the harvest and transitioning weather of the season lend themselves to a time of reflection.

Fresh on the heels of White Cane Safety Day (October 15), my autumn reflections this year center upon the transition to using a white cane. Despite being born legally blind, I did not start using a cane until I was in my forties. I was not presented with the

option of a cane as a child. Growing up in the 1960s and 70s, it was still rare to teach children with visual impairments to use a white cane.

As a pedestrian commuter in my twenties and thirties, I told myself canes were for people who had no functional sight. Since I have some vision, I should “save” the canes for others. I am not alone in this thinking. According to the Perkins School for the Blind, between 2% and 8% of people in the United States with significant vision loss use a white cane. The vast majority of people with visual acuity of less than 20/70 or who have difficulty seeing more than 100 feet away, like me, attempt to use cues in our environment to navigate walking routes, rely on a friend or family member as a sighted guide or use a service animal.

One snowy late fall day, I felt unsure of my footing, nervous to step off the curb into nothingness or catch my heel and twist my ankle. I had been flirting with the idea of using a cane for months, but had not yet taken any action. My travels that day took me right past the Council and I decided that it was time. I remember the mix of feelings as I walked into the Council, holding a cane in my hand for the first time, making my way through the Sharper Vision Store, and my feelings of excitement, fear and curiosity.

With practice and coaching, I became increasingly more confident, both in my navigation skills and in my belief that I had the right to use a cane. I was amazed at the reactions from people around me. I feared people

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For each of us who experience significant vision loss, deciding if and when to transition to using a white cane is a personal decision.

would treat me differently, want to take care of me or avoid me. I experience a bit of that as a cane user, certainly. However, the majority of the time I experience genuine kindness from those I know and total strangers. My cane helps identify me as having a visual impairment. I also love the feeling of moving independently, gracefully and confidently through the world.

Whether you are experiencing fast-paced vision loss or have had a significant visual impairment for a lifetime and do not currently use a white cane, consider the gift of empowerment you can give yourself. I promise it will be freeing to learn how to use one, to reduce your risk of tripping or falling, to navigate sidewalks and streets safely, to explore unfamiliar indoor spaces, and to simply own your vision impairment.

For each of us who experience significant vision loss, deciding if and when to transition to using a white cane is a personal decision. Reflect on whether it is time to consider becoming a cane user. As fall rolls into the holiday season, and we gather with our loved ones, consider this question with those who love you most.

Sincerely,



Denise Jess, CEO/Executive Director

## Low Vision Groups Foster Community

As your vision changes, you might feel like you are the only one having this experience. If you are looking for a supportive group of people who can relate to vision changes, consider joining one of the many Low Vision Support Groups throughout Wisconsin. Connect with peers, listen to speakers for services and agencies that can assist you, and exchange tips and techniques to adapt to changing vision. Find a group near you by visiting [WCBlind.org/low-vision-support-groups](https://www.wcblind.org/low-vision-support-groups).

# 2018 Holiday Gift Guide

The Council's Sharper Vision Store is a one-stop shop for assistive technology and adaptive products. From bump dot markers to CCTVs, find the product that will help you live life to the fullest. Try products in-person during business hours or extended holiday hours, or view hundreds of products online at [WCBlind.org/store](http://WCBlind.org/store).



## **Day-Glo Orange Bump Dot Markers \$5.50**

Easy to see and feel self-adhesive raised dots to use on light switches, appliances, and other items. Pack contains 28 dots. In addition to orange, self-adhesive raised dots are also available in black, white and clear. **HL106**

## **Hoyle Super Jumbo Playing Cards \$3.50**

Standard sized cards 2¼" by 3½".

Numbers and faces are 1" tall. **RL404**



## **Oven Mitt**

**\$4.50**

The 17" oven mitt covers the hand and forearm. The mitt is flame retardant and withstands temperatures of up to 400 degrees. **HK170**

## **Liquid Level Indicator**

**\$12.00**

The EZ Fill hangs on the edge of any container and buzzes when the liquid is one inch from the top.

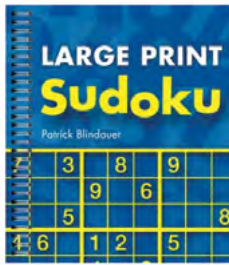
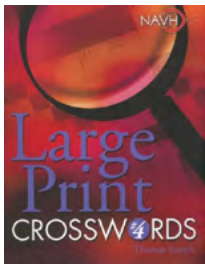
Uses three A76 batteries, included. **HK500**



## **Keychain Talking Clock Spanish (silver) \$12.50**

## **Keychain Talking Clock English (black) \$12.50**

Press the large button on the front to hear the time. Alarm and/or hourly announcement. Size 1½" by 2 3/8". Uses two A76 batteries, included. **TT211S** or **TT211**



### Large Print Crosswords

**\$15.00**

### Large Print Sudoku

**\$15.00**

Each of the 125 crossword puzzles is presented over two 8" x 10" pages in sharp contrast and large type. Spiral bound. Volumes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Sudoku book contains 225 puzzles. **BL440** or **BL442**

### Handheld Magnifiers

The Sharper Vision Store carries a variety of handheld and stand magnifiers, as well as portable and desktop electronic video magnifiers. As magnification power increases, the size of the viewing window decreases. A Low Vision Evaluation helps determine magnification strength, style, positioning, and use.

The illuminated magnifiers below are held about 3" to 4" from the page. Each comes with a cloth carrying bag and has a bright LED light. Uses standard AAA or AA batteries, included. Left to right:

### 3x (8D) Mattingly Stand Magnifier

**\$75.00**

Sits on page and is moved over text. Magnifies the width of newspaper column. **MLO201**

### 3.5x (10D) Eschenbach Magno Magnifier

**\$45.00**

Easy-to-carry in purse. **MLP834**

### 3x (9D) Coil AT Max

**\$65.00**

Automatically turns on when picked up and off when set down. **MLP800**



### Explore 5 Electronic Magnifier **\$595.00**

The Explore 5 has a five-inch LCD screen, high definition autofocus camera, 2x to 22x magnification, and 18 color modes. It can be used on a tabletop with its stand or the stand folds out into a handle. Runs for 3.5 hours of continuous use from a single battery charge and comes with a two-year warranty. **PCCTV11**



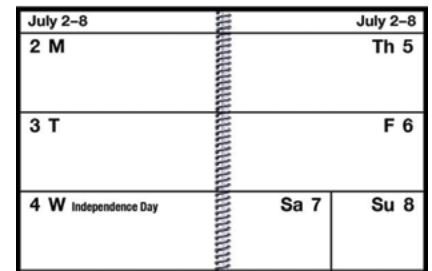


**Check and Deposit Register \$8.50**

Many writing aids are available, including bold line paper and large print address book. Writing templates include guides for signatures, checks, envelopes, and letters. Shown is the Check and Deposit Register to make balancing a checkbook easier. It is 8½" by 11" with space for 12 entries on each of the 50 pages. **WG505**

**2019 Weekly Planner Calendar \$22.00**

The Weekly Planner Calendar is an 8½" by 11" spiral notebook. Each week spans two pages. The Monday through Friday openings measure 3¼" by 8". Monthly views are included. The Sharper Vision Store also carries two large print wall calendars and a large print desk calendar. **CB620**



**Deli Pro Knife and Fork \$20.00**

The Deli Pro Knife is an adjustable knife that cuts uniform slices with a guide that can be set between ¼" and 1". Slice meats, bread, vegetables, and cheese. Includes a fork and wood storage block. **HK110**

**Women's Leather Organizer Wallet \$30.00**

The Money Organizer Wallet has four separate bill compartments for \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 and three coin purses. It has slots for credit cards and a zippered compartment for other information. Comes in black or red. **HP115**



**Portable Lap Desk \$30.00**

Use this to adjust the angle of text when reading with magnifier. The Portable Lap Desk is lightweight and the foam beads conform to lap or angle on a table. Upper surface is non-glare with ledge to hold paper. Flat surface is 15½" by 13¼" and adjusts up to 20 degree angle. Variety of fabric colors. **BK150**



## Color Change Lamp

**\$75.00**

This LED lamp can change from warm to cool to daylight. Lamp can be dimmed to five settings. The flexible shade allows for accurate positioning of light. Foldable; opens to 14½" by 12" by 5¾." USB cable and power adapter included. **LA142**



## Superior Talking Scale

**\$70.00**

The Talking Scale can weigh up to 440 pounds or 220 kilograms. A clear, female voice reads the weight and a digital display shows weight in one inch numbers. Platform is 14½" by 11". Surface is ridged and textured. Uses four AA batteries, included. **HM400**

## Watches and Clocks

The Sharper Vision Store carries watches in the following formats: talking (some are atomic), large print, and braille. Seven talking clocks (some are atomic) and a talking travel clock are available.



## High Contrast Talking Atomic Watch

**\$60.00**

On the left is an atomic watch with black background and white numbers on a black expansion band. Male voice. Daily alarm and hourly chime. Face is 1¼" wide and case is 1½" wide. **TT510**

## Men's Gold Talking Watch

**\$43.50**

The gold talking watch on the right is high contrast with a white background and black numbers on a gold tone expansion band. Male or female voice. Daily alarm and hourly chime. Woman's watch is 15/16" face and 1¼" case. Men's watch is 1¼" face and 1½" case. **TT415**



## Round, Black Wall Clock

**\$25.00**

15" diameter with clear, easy to read 2" high white numbers. Perfect for high contrast viewing. Uses one AA battery, included. **TL109B**



# Giving in Memory: A Way to Show You Care

"My mother lost her sight 68 years ago when my brother was 6, my sister 4, and I was almost two," says Cindy, a donor who gave a financial gift in memory of her mother. "Both of my parents felt it was right to donate to help others with vision loss. My mother was a woman of tremendous faith and strength. I felt that it was right for me to continue her wishes and give to the Council."

Cindy chose to name the Council as a recipient of her mother's memorial donations.

In an obituary, it is common to include names of organizations where friends and family members can send memorial donations. It is a way for loved ones to show support for the decedent and the family while honoring a cause that was important to them. The Council encourages you to talk with your family about which organizations you value. In doing so, please consider including the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired.

If you wish to make a memorial gift, visit **WCBlind.org** or write a check to the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired. Include a note letting us know in whose memory you are making the donation. Mail gifts to 754 Williamson St., Madison, WI 53703. If it would be helpful, we can deliver donation envelopes to the funeral home. Contact Lori Werbeckes, Fund Development Director, with any questions by calling **608-237-8114** or emailing **lwerbeckes@WCBlind.org**.

## Speaking about Changing Vision

Need an experienced speaker to talk about issues related to changing vision? The Council has a Speakers Bureau of experts who can visit groups to talk about a variety of subjects related to vision.

Explore the list of topics at **WCBlind.org/speakersbureau**. Contact Jean Kalscheur, our Director of Education and Vision Services, at **608-237-8106** or via email at **jkalscheur@WCBlind.org** to learn more and to schedule a speaker.

# Get to Know New and Old Staff



Hannah Wentte



Amy Dean



Brent Perzentka

The Council is honored to introduce two new staff members, Hannah Wentte, Communications Director and Amy Dean, Sharper Vision Store Manager. Both started in July. We also have an exciting update about Brent Perzentka as he transitions from the Sharper Vision Store Manager to Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Intern. He is currently completing a master's degree at Western Michigan University and upon graduation he will become the Council's full-time Vision Rehabilitation Specialist. They all sat down with Katherine Corbett, Communications Coordinator.

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## **Katherine Corbett: How did you first encounter and get to know the Council?**

**Brent Perzentka:** I have known about the Council since I was five years old. Both of my parents, who are visually impaired, have been on the board for over 30 years.

**Amy Dean:** I was working as a waitress. Council Program Assistant Adam Grassnickle's mom knew about the position and suggested that I would be a great fit and should apply. From there, I learned more about the Council. I wish I had learned about the Council when my mom was experiencing changing vision.

**Hannah Wentte:** When I worked for the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association, I ran several monthly support groups. Jean Kalscheur, the Council's Director of Education and Vision Services, came and regularly presented about changing vision. Years later, one of my friends saw a position open and suggested I apply.

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## **Katherine: What are the highlights of your professional background?**

**Brent:** Working at the Council for fifteen years has given my professional career a real purpose. Every day is fulfilling. In a lot of ways my work with the Council has helped me realize my unique situation as a child with two parents with visual impairments. It has helped me appreciate my unique experience, and I can share that with others and help them in their lives if they are struggling with losing their vision or living with a visual impairment.

**Amy:** I get so much satisfaction working in customer service. I love interacting with people every day. I have worked as manager at a bookstore and at Kwik Trip.

**Hannah:** I have a background in nonprofit communications and enjoy working at places that improve people's health. My first job in Madison was with the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, and I also worked in marketing for SSM Health and most recently for REAP Food Group.

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## **Katherine: What excites you about your new role at the Council?**

**Brent:** I am excited to work with people in different areas, at their workplace, or in their homes. I like that there are a variety of things I can teach different people.

**Amy:** I am looking forward to learning and expanding my knowledge about everything the Council offers. Being able to help customers realize they can still do the things they enjoy and that vision loss does not mean their life is over, is so empowering to me. I am excited to get the word out and let people know what a wonderful organization we are.

**Hannah:** I am excited to take the mission, vision and values of the Council and share them with a wider audience. I want to explore how we can continue to share stories of people who are blind and visually impaired. I am excited to work alongside people who care about their job.

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## **Katherine: What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

**Brent:** I enjoy spending time with my family, playing in baseball and basketball leagues in the community, and going camping.

**Amy:** I spend most of my free time reading, hiking, working on old houses, and hanging out with my grandkids.

**Hannah:** I love playing ultimate frisbee, practicing yoga, going paddle-boarding, and gardening. ■



## Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

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## 2018 Extended Holiday Store Hours

**Thursdays: Nov. 15 and 29, Dec. 6 and 20, 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.**

**Saturdays: Nov. 24, Dec. 8 and 15, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Need to complete holiday shopping for a loved one or yourself? The Council's Sharper Vision Store will be open extended hours this winter so you can try products in-person and find the perfect item. Shopping is also available online at **WCBlind.org/store**.

## Stay Connected

Stay up to date with events, legislation, news and technology related to blindness or vision loss by subscribing to weekly Council emails. Council Courier is available in large print, braille and CD. To request an alternative format, email Justin at **jlemke@WCBlind.org** or call **608-237-8119**.

