

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Friends of the Council,



The year 2005 has been filled with changes, challenges and choices. One of the most significant changes is that of our name. From now on we will be known as 'The Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired.' This

change is just one of many identified during the strategic planning project in 2004.

Another change at the Council will be our selection of our new Executive Director. After eight years of service, Dick Pomo has chosen to retire to the golf course and his family. At this time, a careful and extensive search for his replacement is underway. Choosing a new director is a long and difficult process. It also presents the opportunity to look for new ideas and skills which match the Council's needs at this time.

We have undergone fantastic growth over the past several years, and as state services are cut back or eliminated, the needs of the blind and visually impaired citizens of Wisconsin will be satisfied by organizations such as the Council. This higher demand on our resources will mean continued growth and increased need for adequate funding for our crucial programs and services. In the years to come we will be developing more aggressive outreach to citizens state-wide, and this, too, will require financial resources not yet identified. In order to approach the issue of financial support more directly, we will be adding a dedicated position on our staff which will be in charge of planning, creating and implementing events and campaigns to help us improve and increase our ability to obtain funding to match our growth and needs.

Another important change identified through our long range planning process is an

increased need to partner with organizations and groups who offer similar or complementary programs and services. Technology is always changing and we are working hard to use it to enhance our services and reach more people in more places. Just one example of this is a web-based conference product that will significantly reduce our telephone costs for meetings. As travel becomes more costly and difficult, this type of technology will play an important role in our programs and service delivery efforts.

Throughout the year, we have sponsored many special recognition and public education events, always working to prove our mission is more to us than just words. To achieve our mission we must use as many tools as possible. These include education, recognition, example, and encouragement. From meeting with state legislators at the Capitol, to golf events, to playing cards with the public in Edgerton, to presenting public service honors to radio station WCLO, to our annual awards banquet, to speaking at conferences all over Wisconsin, we provide help or just a shoulder to lean on for blind and visually impaired folks and their families. We live our mission every day.

However, no year is complete without heartfelt thanks to all of the wonderful people and groups who have made the Council's mission and support a part of their lives. We can't continue without this help, and all of the Council members—present and past, as well as the thousands of people we serve—thank you. There is not enough room in this report to mention everyone, but as you read the rest of this document, a few special friends will be highlighted. Their efforts on our behalf are gratifying and deeply appreciated.

We head into the year 2006 with much to be thankful for and much to look forward to. From all of the Council members and our amazing staff, we again thank you.

Chris Zenchenko, Council President

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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Dear Friends,



It has been eight years since I was fortunate enough to be selected as the director of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind. I felt very privileged then, as I do now, to be part of an organization which, for more than 50 years, has

had as its mission to promote the independence and dignity of individuals in Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired. However, while our mission remains the same, the members of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and its staff recognize the importance of adapting programs and services to meet the changing needs of the individuals we serve.

In the spring of this year, Council members and staff began the process of long range planning. For those of you who have been involved in this activity, you know there are many steps needed to complete the task. Long range planning allows an organization to look at critical areas related to day-to-day operations, while providing the opportunity to plan for the future. Some of the areas which were examined included looking at how we perceive ourselves,

how others perceive us, and where our programs fit in the current and future scheme of services to the blind and visually impaired of our state. We also took a look at how we can be more effective in serving individuals who are significantly vision impaired, but who do not view themselves as blind.

The Council chose to redefine the profile of the target audience it would like to reach, and at the same time invest resources to increase our effectiveness as a statewide organization. In order to accomplish this task, we will need to increase our efforts to establish partnerships with organizations or agencies serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. We look forward to this challenge.

With its commitment to extend services to a larger portion of the growing population of older citizens, the Council is changing its name to Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. It is our desire to reach out and serve individuals experiencing a significant sight loss. Through direct intervention, we can increase our ability to help people with fading vision continue to lead meaningful and productive lives.

*Sincerely,*

Dick Pomo, Executive Director  
Madison

**Building on our Foundation—Planning for the Future**

*The WCB continues the strategic planning process*

# WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND 2005



*These men and women contribute countless volunteer hours in service to the programs of the WCB. Their dedication is greatly appreciated. They successfully carry the message of the WCB throughout the state. Jerry Bever, Monona; Kathleen Brockman, Milwaukee; Caroline Congdon, Milwaukee; Nona Graves, West Allis; Kathleen Hudziak, Janesville; Bob Hueller, Sheboygan; Richard Johnson, Janesville; Bruce Parkinson, Two Rivers; Paul Schroeder, Milwaukee; Rhonda Staats, La Crosse; Arnold Tucker, Park Falls; Jeff Scott, Madison; Rebecca Williams, Milwaukee; Dean Winger, Madison; Chris Zenchenko, Evansville; and Dick Pomo, Executive Director, Madison.*



*Not pictured above, but shown here are Virginia DeBlaey, Madison; Scott Hegle, Waukesha; Kay Malmquist, Janesville; Patty Slaby, River Falls.*

# THE LEGACY CIRCLE:

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## How we fund our programs and services

**L**eg-a-cy (leg'ə sē) *n.*, Money or property left to someone by a will; bequest.

This is the official definition of legacy in Webster's New World Dictionary. This definition very accurately describes what a legacy legally is, but does not do justice to the legacy's long term advantages to those who are its beneficiaries. The WCB chose to establish a Legacy Circle at its Annual Meeting of November 10, 2000.

Since that time, we have received \$2,100,000 from wills and special bequests. Since the WCB was established in 1952, 256 individuals have contributed to the Council through a legacy gift. Our Legacy Circle was created to help recognize these wonderful and significant gifts.

Every financial gift to the Council has made a substantial difference. Many donors are also cherished friends and supporters. The income from our George Card Endowment Fund, for instance, serve as the mainstay of our service and program financial support.

One of the Council's most important functions is to oversee the care of our endowment fund. The Council is very proud that it has never lost focus on maintaining its existing resources. They also maintain a strong group

commitment to creatively search for new funding sources, helping to build a fiscally sound future.

WCB offers a program of planned giving. Here are some ways you may wish to participate:

1. Bequest cash, securities or other assets in your will.
2. Identify the WCB as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, annuity, IRA, 401k or other retirement plans.
3. Establish a designated gift to support a specific program or service (example: Technology or Low Vision).

We will work with you and your attorney, financial planner or advisor. All possible contributions and donation amounts are

strictly confidential. We know you will be satisfied with the stewardship of the funds at the WCB. Help us continue to provide needed services and programs to blind and visually impaired individuals. Membership in the Legacy Circle is open to any individuals who have named or intend to name the WCB as a beneficiary in their will. Call the WCB development office for more information.



*A true legacy: a new white cane*

***Invest in the future of WCB—  
Become a member of the Legacy Circle***



# FUNDRAISING HELPS MEET OUR MISSION

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## Your Support Sustains Us in More than One Way

We have a file in our office named “Quotable Quotes.” It’s filled with notes that people have sent to us when they make a gift to the White Cane Fund or another Council program.

The notes come from across the state, from people who’ve received a free white cane, from people who have purchased a light or magnifier or other tool from our store, or from family members who saw how we helped their mother or father live independently after losing eyesight. They share stories about how we make a difference in their lives.

Sometimes people include a dollar or two along with their notes; sometimes they include \$100 or \$1,000. No matter the amount, every note and every dollar helps to sustain us in our work.

Knowing that our clients benefit daily from our programs makes our work worthwhile. Knowing that people trust us to be good stewards of their charitable gifts enables us to

continue to provide services, information and advocacy, always with the goal of increased independence and improved quality of life for people who are blind or visually impaired.

When you give a gift to the Council:

- You help people like Evelyn, age 80, live independently in her home;
- You help people like Mildred, from Beaver Dam, who “would be lost” without her white cane because she’s a “walker.”
- You help people like Kate, a social services professional, improve her job skills through our computer classes.
- You help people like Adam, a student who can navigate around his college campus because of mobility skills training.

On behalf of Evelyn, Mildred, Kate, Adam and the thousands of other people we are honored to serve, thank you for your words of encouragement and gifts of support.



# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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The WCB offers two programs which provide individualized services to Wisconsin residents who are learning to cope with blindness or severe vision loss.

## Vision Rehabilitation

The Vision Rehabilitation program was started fourteen years ago and the Rehabilitation Teaching program was added four years later. At a time when state funding for similar programs has been dramatically decreased, our programs offer individuals an excellent alternative.

Marshall Flax, a certified low vision therapist, works closely with ophthalmologists and other eye care professionals to meet each individual's special needs. During an initial appointment, he answers questions to help each person understand the characteristics of his particular type of vision loss. He conducts a trial of several devices which will allow a person to best use any remaining vision. Low vision aids may range from a simple hand-held magnifier used for reading, to a closed circuit video reading system. A person may borrow a specific device for a home trial before purchasing it.

## Accomplishments for 2005 WCB Programs and Services

- 931 white canes provided to state residents at no charge
- 48 volunteers provided thousands of volunteer service hours
- 430 people directly served by rehabilitation, braille, technology, mobility and orientation programs
- 84,000 miles logged on Wisconsin roads by WCB staff, Council members and volunteers
- 153 presentations at schools, hospitals, independent living centers, civic groups, clubs, symposiums and corporations
- 1,121 people served at WCB seminars in Wisconsin
- \$180,000 of assistive devices provided to Wisconsin residents below program cost
- \$1,000 scholarships provided to 6 college or technical school students
- 26,000 information and referral calls received
- 55 related unaffiliated groups collaborated with us to ensure quality services to blind individuals
- 61 radio, newspaper and TV interviews on the subject of vision loss, blindness and coping with those conditions

Follow-up appointments may be scheduled for further training.

## Rehabilitation Teaching

David Ballman, our rehabilitation teacher, visits most of his students in their own homes. His services often include marking appliances with tactile dots, creating a labeling system for groceries, prescription drugs etc., and demonstrating the use of adaptive equipment such as talking clocks and watches, bold point pens, Braille and large print playing cards and self-

threading needles. He teaches Braille and modified techniques for cooking and cleaning. He refers his students to other community services and encourages them to participate in support groups.

The goal for both of these programs is to increase each person's level of independence and encourage continued participation in the family and community. The cost for both programs is covered by the WCB and we are always looking for new funding sources to meet these expenses.



*Father Blazewicz from Onalaska, Wisconsin, reviews the sports page using a CCTV. He likes the headline "Brewers get best of Cubs."*

# ASSISTIVE DEVICES & THE STORE

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*Top, Sue and Brent provide excellent service. They help us manage an important program.*

The store's new face includes racks that allow us to display more items on the sales floor in easy-to-find categories, along

with a specific display area for white canes. Throughout the store there is both Braille and large print signage to make categories, item names, and prices easily available to customers. The store also has new lighting that brightens the atmosphere making it much easier to look at merchandise and other information. The spotlights have individual controls, so we can adjust the lighting level to meet customer needs.

We also have designated areas for specialty equipment. We have an area with chairs and new lighting for trying out magnifiers. CCTVs are on display for people to try. If customers are thinking of purchasing assistive computer software such as JAWS or ZoomText, the store has two computers available with these products for a demonstration.



*Shopping in the newly remodeled store is much more customer friendly.*

*Shoppers from Lakeview Estates in Fond du Lac show off their purchases from the WCB assistive devices store.*



# TECHNOLOGY

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2005 saw an increase in the number of people served by the technology program. More than 260 people from around the state took computer courses offered through our distance learning program. We continue to seek funding for this important program.

Students learned the basics about computers and the more advanced aspects of what a computer can do such as how to create CD's. We found that some classes are more adaptable to this type of learning than others.

Part of any good technology program is keeping up with the current trends. Our staff

attended conferences this year in order to learn about new technology that is available. We were able to implement some of that new technology here at the office as well as for demonstration to consumers.

In the coming year the technology program hopes to take "the show on the road." We will visit areas that might not have traditional access to computers and assistive technology to offer group classes in each community and work with other professionals in a train the trainer type of situation.



*Betsy Gruba, Technology Director, describing assistive technology to Lisa Wettstaedt and Kristen Cogswell of SBC. The Council was awarded a significant financial gift to expand mobile technology services and training.*

**[www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org)**  
Stay in Touch. Visit our website

# 2005 WISCONSIN WHITE CANE REPORT

For 53 years we have proudly assisted blind and visually impaired persons to achieve dignity and independence. The WCB Annual White Cane Fund plays a crucial role in funding the services that help us meet our stated mission. Funding and contributions are provided statewide for adaptive equipment, public education, rehabilitation teaching, mobility and orientation programs, technology training, scholarships and of course the free white canes that give our fund drive its name. Since 2000, the WCB has raised and distributed over \$390,000 to groups and organizations throughout the state of Wisconsin. This year all of our financial distributions will be made on January 1, 2006

in order to bring this program into compliance with our calendar year budget process.

For the second consecutive year, we have coordinated our public awareness campaign of the white cane law with a consortium of organizations dedicated to serving and representing blind and visually impaired individuals. Our thanks again this year to Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle for declaring October 15, 2005 White Cane Safety Day. Very special thanks to the DHFS Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired for their leadership and support in this year's public awareness campaign. 2005 was our most successful public safety and awareness campaign year ever.



*White Cane travel: First steps to independence*

## **The White Cane Law in Wisconsin states**

“An operator of a vehicle shall stop the vehicle before approaching closer than 10 feet to a pedestrian who is carrying a cane or walking stick which is white in color or white trimmed with red and which is held in an extended or raised position or who is using a dog guide and shall take such precautions as may be necessary to avoid accident or injury to the pedestrian.”

# ALLOCATIONS FOR 2005

## WCB WHITE CANE FUND

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Badger Association Guide Dog Users  
Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc.  
Barron County Library  
Blindskills, Inc.  
Center for Blind and Visually Impaired Children  
Center for Deaf-Blind Persons, Inc.  
Midwest Association for the Blind  
Options for Independent Living—Green Bay  
St. William's Janesville Boy Scouts  
Volunteer Braillists & Tapists, Inc.  
Volunteer Services for the Visually Handicapped

Wisconsin Association of Blind Athletes  
Wisconsin Blind Bowling Association

### **Council Allocations:**

Council White Cane Fund  
Council Rehabilitation Teaching  
Council Low Vision Program  
State Rehabilitation Teachers & Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired Assistive Devices Program  
WCB Store Accessibility Improvements and Remodeling  
White Cane Safety Brochures and Increased Public Information Programs



*Your generosity makes a difference and we look forward in 2006 to sharing the exciting news of what we accomplished together.*



*Thank you to every single person who has helped in this effort. We believe it is good business to let you know where and how your donations are used.*

# FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT

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Wisconsin Council of the Blind

October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005

## Assets

Cash	\$716,305
Investments	5,836,284
Loans Receivable, Net	95,965
Other Assets	279,257
Property and Equipment, Net	1,277,144
Total Assets	\$8,204,955

## Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$611
Accrued Expenses	9,460
Total Liabilities	\$10,071

## Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$8,204,955
Permanently Restricted	50,322
Total Net Assets	8,204,955
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$8,204,955

## Sources of Operating Fund

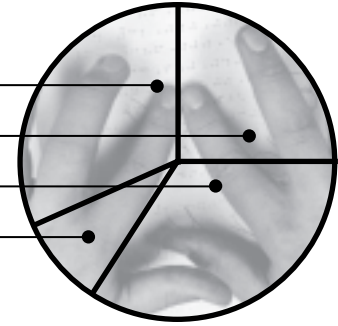
Special Grants and Individual Gifts	\$248,347
General Contributions and White Cane Fund	68,252
Legacy Circle Bequests	594,291
Endowment Interest and Dividends	75,012
Total	\$985,902

## Operating Fund Utilization

General Operations and Administration	\$179,959
Public Education, Development, Capacity Campaign and Philanthropy	102,973
WCB Programs and Services	702,077
Total	\$985,009

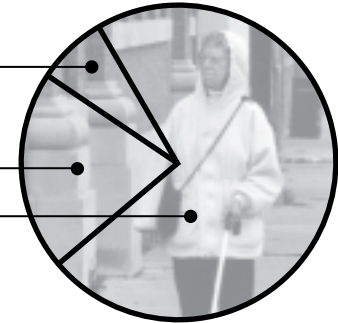
## Sources of Operating Fund

General Contributions and White Cane Fund	31%
Endowment Interest and Dividends	25%
Legacy Circle Bequests	34%
Special Grants and Individual Gifts	10%



## Operating Fund Utilization

Public Education, Development, Capacity Campaign and Philanthropy	8%
General Operations and Administration	22%
WCB Programs and Services	70%



*2005 Philanthropy Day in Eau Claire, Wisconsin: A Celebration of Giving! Rhonda Staats, Sue Sippl, Dan Sippl, Dick Pomo, Arnold Tucker and Patty Slaby participate in the presentation of Outstanding Philanthropist to Dan Sippl of Eau Claire for his leadership, involvement and support.*



# SEMINARS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

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With the conclusion of the very successful seminar on Macular Degeneration in October 2005 (675 attendees!), the Council continued to set high participation records for special events and educational programs. In 2005, 1,121 people attended WCB seminars and programs. We were successful in securing enough funding for these special programs that all participants attended free of charge.

From Philanthropy Day in Eau Claire, to theater in Monroe, to euchre in Edgerton, to golf in Elkhart Lake, to the professional seminar in Green Bay, the Council reached out to all geographic areas of Wisconsin. We shared ideas and professional knowledge, said thank you to friends and supporters and had greater success in educating the general public. Involved Council members, friends and staff took center stage at all our events.

*WCLO Radio 75th Anniversary Celebration in Janesville, Wisconsin. Chris Zenchenko, WCB President, Bob Daily, Stan Milan and Al Fedari, from the station at awards brunch.*



*Euchre tournament in Edgerton: good cards, cash prizes and increased public awareness.*

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

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“Vote as if your life depends on it. Because it does.” Justin Dart said these words publicly in October 2004. His sentiment strongly echoes the past voices of leadership at the WCB. In fact, legislative advocacy was one of the primary reasons the WCB was officially forged together in 1952. Since that time, the WCB has aggressively continued to participate in the legislative process at the local, state and federal levels of government.

Representing the concerns and aspirations of blind and visually impaired persons is a top priority of the Council and its Legislative Committee. Rhonda Staats of La Crosse continues to chair this important committee. The goal of this committee is to ensure that

elected legislators understand the issues, needs and concerns of our statewide community. The council by vote has established an ambitious progressive agenda for 2006. Issues include: Continued support for the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Janesville, the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Help America Vote Act (HAVA), improved access to all the state’s technology programs and a coordinator for the effort, continued improvement and support for the Business Enterprise Program (Randolph Sheppard Vendors), support for the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired and its statewide networks, optimum funding for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), improved pedestrian safety and increased support for public transportation, removal of the Wisconsin sales tax on assistive devices, equal access to sport and recreational activities, opposition to unfair voter ID legislation, improved dog guide protection, updating Wisconsin statutes to include new ADA rules on service animals, and support for the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. The WCB wants you to know that we welcome your suggestions on advocacy or changes to our statutory laws. Please contact our office with your views and opinions.



*WCB Staff Marshall Flax and David Ballmann meet and thank U.S. Senator Russ Feingold for his support and interest in issues affecting blind and visually impaired citizens.*

# DEDICATION AND SERVICE

## THE WISCONSIN LIONS CLUBS

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We once again dedicate this page of our Annual Report in sincere appreciation of all the Lions and Lionesses in our great state. The official mission statements of the Wisconsin Lions and the WCB have many similarities. Our organizational long term relationship has helped us both continue our programs and services. The Wisconsin Lions organization continues to provide us with countless gifts of time, helpful encouragement and financial support. We have always appreciated each and every gift.

### Building on the Community's Assets

2005 Lions Clubs participating in our Assistive Devices Partnership Program and the White Cane Fund Drive:

- Beloit Noon Lions
- Brillion Lions Club
- Chaseburg Lioness Club
- Eau Claire/Seymour Lions Club
- Eldorado Lions Club
- Elkhart Lake Lions Club
- Francis Creek Lions Club
- Grand Chute Lions Club
- Greenville Lioness Club
- Hancock Lions Club
- Janesville Evening Lions Club
- Kiel Lions Club
- Lakeshore Lions Club
- Lomira Lions Club
- Madison Central Lions Club
- McCaslin Lioness Club
- McFarland Lions Club
- Neshkoro Lions Club
- New Glarus Lions Club
- Newton Lions Club
- Northwoods Lions Club
- Oconto Lions Club
- Oregon Lioness Club
- Packwaukee Lions Club
- Plymouth Lions
- Portage Lions Club
- Richland Center Lions Club
- Ripon Lions Club
- Sheboygan Falls Lions Club
- Sheboygan Noon Lions Club
- Sun Prairie Lions Club
- Verona Lions Club
- Vesper Lions Club
- Waukesha Evening Lions Club
- Wautoma Lions Club
- West Bend Lioness Club
- West Grant Lioness Club
- Wild Rose Lions Club



*The Monroe Lions Club helped sponsor the Monroe Community Theatre production of "Wait Until Dark." Chris Zenchenko, President of the WCB thanks Maria Buchler, who played the main character Susy, and Production Director John C. Peterson. Rhonda Staats joins the group in front of the stage set.*