

**Wisconsin Council of the Blind and
Visually Impaired**
608.255.1166 • 800.783.5213 www.wcblind.org

***Providing Powerful Tools for
Independence***

Quality of Life



Accessibility

Opportunity

**2007 Annual Report
and White Cane Fund Appeal**
Large Print Copy

***Alone we can do so little, together we
can do so much. ~Helen Keller***

September, 2008

Dear Friend,

Since 1952, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired has been dedicated to promoting the dignity and independence of people in Wisconsin who are blind and visually impaired by providing services, advocating legislation and educating the general public.

In 2007, we focused our time, energy and resources on community outreach and education throughout the state. From Eagle River to Kenosha, and from Eau Claire to Milwaukee, we connected the Council's programs and services with individuals and their family members who were searching for information and assistance. We continue to expand and strengthen our relationships with many organizations serving older adults throughout Wisconsin. Donations made through our annual White Cane Fund helped us provide powerful tools for independence!

Why is this so important?

Every seven minutes, someone in America will become blind or visually impaired. By 2030, the estimated number of visually impaired Americans 65 and older will double to seven million. Visual impairment can have a great impact on the quality of life for older adults as well as family members. Low vision can create challenges for elders to prepare meals, shop for groceries, find transportation to medical appointments, or manage the household and finances. Low vision has been known to increase the risk of falls and resulting fractures, which may result in an older person losing independence.

The current increasing need presents an opportunity for you to join us in our mission. Your gift to the White Cane Fund will enable us to stretch our reach around the state, create innovative and collaborative programs, distribute free white canes to people of all ages, expand products in the Sharper Vision Store, and offer hope, help and inspiration to so many people. ***Together we really can do so much!***

We are grateful for any help you can give toward providing powerful tools for independence.

On behalf of those we serve, we thank you,

Christopher Zenchenko
Council President

Karen V. Majkrzak
Executive Director

Your gift to the White Cane Fund is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. For more ways to provide a gift, please call 1-800-783-5213. The Council is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are greatly appreciated and wisely used.

To request a Braille copy of this report, call 800-783-5213.

Independence Is Our Mission

In 1952, when the world was limited for blind people and dependence on others was the norm, George Card and other blind and visually impaired men and women with limited resources formed the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired.

For more than 55 years, the Council has worked tirelessly to forge new paths and help break down barriers that prevent blind and visually impaired people from functioning independently and participating fully in society. Today, people who are blind or visually impaired have a whole world of possibilities before them. Our strategic vision includes an emphasis on increasing opportunities for meaningful employment among people who are blind and visually impaired.

Challenging times present increasing opportunities

For many of us, loss of vision will be among the changes we experience in the aging process. Looking toward the next 50 years, as major demographic segments grow older, we are preparing for a significant increase in vision loss due to age-related eye diseases such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma. Our Vision Road Show - Rural Mobile Vision Rehabilitation Services - carries out the Council's mission to address unmet needs in rural areas of Wisconsin. Costs associated with adult vision problems in the U.S. are estimated to be \$51.4 billion.

Our mission remains constant. We are committed to empowering and assisting the growing number of people who must make lifestyle changes and adjustments due to vision impairment. We are dedicated to helping people who are blind or visually impaired maintain their independence, dignity and a satisfying quality of life.

We provide:

- One-on-one low vision exams that help people learn how to maximize their remaining vision
- Rehabilitation training that teaches powerful skills and adaptive techniques to help people do everyday tasks in new ways
- Free white canes to promote independent travel and increase accessibility to a greater number of activities
- The Sharper Vision Store, which features more than 900 low-cost assistive devices to help people manage daily living activities and remain self-sufficient
- Assistive technology to help people be better informed and more connected to the world around them
- Scholarships to help individuals obtain gainful employment through higher education
- Council-sponsored seminars throughout the state provide community awareness and education
- Outreach and advocacy that break down barriers and enable blind and visually impaired individuals to obtain meaningful employment and maintain the same quality of life sighted people enjoy

In others' words: the Council's work impacts people's lives

I recently received your talking microwave which I ordered for my aunt. She is so thankful to be able to prepare her own meals. She is legally blind from macular degeneration, and she really enjoys regaining some independence. Thank you for a great product!

-Jan V.

I am 10 years old, and I'm legally blind in my left eye. I received a white cane from you, and right from the get-go I wanted to send this letter to thank you for it. I appreciate it because the cane really helps me, and I did a presentation on National White Cane Safety Day. My cane helps me by sending vibrations up the tip, through the shaft, and into my arms.

- Bailey H.

My mother is a very feisty, not-eager-to-listen 90-year-old. Marshall Flax, your low vision therapist, was able to help her a lot. He was very affirming of my mother, and he gave her hope that she could still manage in her own home environment. Most of all, Marshall was able to help her read!

- Rev. Scott H.

2007...by the numbers

- **9,412:** The number of people in Wisconsin served by the Council
- **3,575:** The number of customers in our Sharper Vision Store
- **803:** People who received computer technology assistance
- **764:** White Canes distributed throughout Wisconsin
- **172:** Low vision evaluations administered
- **707:** Attendees at our sixth Macular Degeneration Symposium
- **2,329:** People who attended Council presentations and seminars
- **126:** Six-month number of rehabilitation training home visits
- **226:** Hours spent advocating on behalf of the blind and visually impaired in Wisconsin
- **3,212:** Volunteer hours donated by our friends and supporters for special events, mailings, meetings, publications, committee work, outreach

Education



Recreation



Sharper Vision Store



Empowerment

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED, INC.

*Overview of Financial Position
December 31, 2007 and 2006 from Audit Report (*)*

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 579,982	1,126,413
Other current assets	<u>100,961</u>	<u>153,350</u>
Total current assets	680,943	1,279,763
Property and Equipment	1,330,712	1,381,954
Other assets:		
Investments	6,858,891	6,238,890
Loans receivable – net	<u>144,845</u>	<u>70,111</u>
Total other assets	7,003,736	6,309,001
Total Assets	<u>\$ 9,015,391</u>	<u>\$ 8,970,718</u>
 LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accrued expenses	\$ 35,383	32,386
Total Net Assets	8,980,008	8,938,332
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 9,015,391</u>	<u>\$8,970,718</u>

***(*) To request a copy of the Council's 2007 audit, prepared by
Wegner LLP, CPAs, call the Executive Director at 608-237-8103***

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together we can do so much.**

~Helen Keller

2008 Council Members

Kathleen Brockman, Milwaukee
Cory Ballard, Milwaukee
Rod Burris, Janesville
Neil M. Ford, Lodi
Nona Graves, West Allis
(Secretary)
Sarah Heesen, West Allis
Scott Hogle, Waukesha
Richard Johnson, Janesville
Kathy Kent, Milwaukee
Bruce Parkinson, Two Rivers
(Vice President)
Richard Perzentka, Madison
Dan Sippl, Eau Claire
Amy Snow, Janesville
Rhonda Staats, La Crosse
Gary M. Traynor, Eau Claire
Arnold Tucker, Park Falls
(Treasurer)
Ed Weiss, Waukesha
Becky Williams, Milwaukee
Chris Zenchenko, Evansville
(President)

Karen V. Majkrzak, Madison
Executive Director

Staff Members

Heather Buggs*
Customer Service & Sharper Vision Store
Ray Cubberly
Data Management & Customer Service
Virginia DeBlaey*
Vision Rehabilitation Teaching
Marshall Flax
Low Vision Services and Orientation
& Mobility Training
Fred Gluck*
Technology Assistant
Gary Goyke
Marketing/Public Relations & Advocacy
Betsy Gruba
Assistive Technology/Webmaster
Jean Kalscheur
Rehabilitation Teaching
Kathi Koegle*
Community Outreach & Development
Melanie McIntosh*
Grant Writing
Deda Oatsvall
Finance & Benefits
Connie Pagel*
Customer Service & Sharper Vision Store
Brent Perzentka
Sharper Vision Store Management
Ann Salazar*
Judith Rasmussen*
Customer Service &
Free White Cane Program

(*) indicates part time position

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired celebrates the creative spirit of persons who are blind and visually impaired. We provide art exhibit space and welcome inquiries from artists.



"Blue Ocean" by Albert D. Schmiede

Mauston, Wisconsin artist Albert D. Schmiede paints naturescapes with oils on canvas. He uses his limited vision, due to macular degeneration, to "push the boundaries of my abilities." This image is available in beautiful note cards at our Sharper Vision Store.

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is a private, not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to promote the dignity and independence of people in Wisconsin who are blind and visually impaired by providing services, advocating legislation, and educating the general public.

**Wisconsin Council of the Blind
& Visually Impaired, Inc.**
754 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703-3546

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Our eyes are on the future!