



Wisconsin is home to more than 200,000 women, men and children of all ages who are blind or visually impaired. What we might take for granted—education, meaningful employment, access to social and public services, recreation and mobility—can seem challenging or unattainable to people with vision loss.

**The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired** was created in 1952. **Our 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.**

Because the Council is composed of 19 blind or visually impaired individuals, we know firsthand about the desire to live as independently as possible and to enjoy the same quality of life that sighted people enjoy.

# 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



## IMAGES of INDEPENDENCE



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

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON, WI  
PERMIT NO.  
2082

Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired  
754 Williamson Street • Madison, WI 53703-3546  
608.255.1166 • 800.783.5213 • [www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org)

## Why Do We Exist?

- To help people stay in their homes by teaching them skills to manage daily activities. Last year, our rehabilitation training staff made 195 home visits.
- To raise awareness of vision health and the latest in medical advances and technology through programs and seminars. In 2008, 3,443 people attended these Council-sponsored events.
- To teach people how to make the most of their remaining vision by offering low vision evaluations. Our certified low vision specialist administered 198 assessments.
- To provide tools and assistive devices that help individuals remain self-sufficient through our Sharper Vision Store. 2,877 customers purchased a wide variety of utilitarian and recreational items in 2008.
- To improve mobility through the use of a white cane and orientation and mobility training. We distributed 712 free white canes throughout the state last year, and we provided mobility training for 46 clients.
- To show those who are blind or visually impaired how to remain connected to the world and each other as well as how to access services and explore employment opportunities through assistive technology and training. In 2008, 763 people received computer technology training or advice from our staff.

***In 2008, the Council served 8,434 people with programs, services, education, outreach and advocacy.***



## WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED, INC.

**Overview of Financial Position December 31, 2007 and 2008 from Audit Report (\*)**

ASSETS	2007	2008
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	579,982	817,531
Other current assets	100,961	95,625
Total current assets	680,943	913,156
Property and Equipment	1,330,712	1,279,646
Other assets:		
Investments	6,858,891	5,015,826
Loans receivable - net	123,941	123,941
Total other assets	7,003,736	5,139,767
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 9,015,391</b>	<b>\$ 7,332,569</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accrued expenses	35,383	42,493
Total Net Assets	8,980,008	7,290,076
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 9,015,391</b>	<b>\$ 7,332,569</b>

(\*) To request a copy of the 2008 audit, prepared by Wegner LLP, CPAs, call the Executive Director at 608-237-8103

Donations allow the Council to offer many services and adaptive products without charge to individuals who are unable to purchase them.

***“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”***  
***- Helen Keller***

Dear Friend,

No matter where you get your news these days, you will find information on the difficult economy. Some of the hardest-hit groups include disabled people, and obviously the non-profit organizations that exist to serve them.

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired is fortunate to be made up of members and staff who are dedicated and focused—not only on today—but on the future. The dedication to both is shown in the consistent and studied approach to managing the organization's financial operations. The Council has made it clear that programs must be continued and supported.

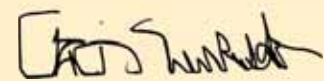
Tight control on expenses and useful advice from Associated Bank have allowed the Council to minimize as much as possible the impact on our endowment funds. However, reliance on donations and returns on investments in hard times is not enough to keep moving the organization in the direction we would like. **Promoting independence through our programs and services remains our highest calling**, and our latest program demonstrates this philosophy in a clear and unambiguous fashion.

**docuScan of Wisconsin** is a program designed to help our organization improve and stabilize funding. Just as important to us as the financial potential is the opportunity this program provides for people with disabilities to find employment in meaningful jobs. It also enables us to provide even more comprehensive services to the community we serve.

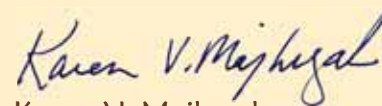
Meaningful employment sets a solid example and sends a strong message. Independence is possible and worthwhile. The Council's various programs are all designed to support independence, and our newest program brings them all together.

Continued community support and donations, intelligent financial management, and now the business potential of **docuScan of Wisconsin** all combine to make the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired the stable and reliable organization it is and will continue to be in the years ahead. For more information, please visit [www.docuscanwi.com](http://www.docuscanwi.com).

*On behalf of those we serve, thank you.*



Christopher Zenchenko  
Council President



Karen V. Majkrzak  
Executive Director

## You Make a Visible Difference!

Thanks to your help, we are able to make a difference by increasing and enhancing independence and quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired through Council programs, services, education, advocacy and outreach.

During 2008, 48 community groups, companies and foundations supported our work with gifts and grants. In addition, 125 individual donors gave us gifts of \$500 or more.

Associated Bank has generously sponsored several Council fundraising events.



Madison's Gordon Flesch Company and the Universal Service Program at the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin provided funding to operate our "Accessible web Sites 101" classes. Madison Rotary Foundation helped us create the "Get a Life" program for Madison-area visually impaired students making the transition from middle to high school. The J.J. Keller Foundation awarded a grant to support our community education work.

We continue to be grateful for the ongoing support of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (Carl and Alma S. Greilach Fund, William R. and Lois J. Phillips Fund, and Catherine and Walter Lindsay Foundation Fund). Other foundations providing gifts in 2008 include: the Edward & Hannah Rutledge Charities, Inc.; the H.J. Hagge Foundation; Alliant Energy Foundation; Sub-Zero Foundation; and the Howard Frankenthal Family Foundation. The J.B. O'Connor Memorial Golf Tournament at the Autumn Ridge Golf Course continued its generous support of the Council.

When you make a charitable gift to the Council, you're in good company!

*We believe that everyone deserves to live a quality life, with access to information, education, meaningful employment, social services and recreation. When you support the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, you strengthen the fabric of the larger community.*

## A Story of INDEPENDENCE

Justin Kubehl and Rhonda Lewis, a young Madison couple and the parents of 13-month-old Corbin, believe that blindness and visual impairment do not define who they are as people.



Rhonda has been visually impaired since birth, but lost most of her usable vision several years ago. Justin lost a large amount of his sight when he was 16. He has experienced numerous eye surgeries, including

a cornea transplant. Other vision challenges have included a detached retina and glaucoma.

The Council has been a great resource for Justin and Rhonda. When setting up their first apartment as a family, they purchased several talking products, including a microwave, clock, caller ID and an indoor/outdoor thermometer from the Sharper Vision Store. Rhonda received a braille slate and stylus and the Council loaned her a braille. Justin commented, "We really value these items because they help us live more independent lives, and that is very important to us."

Justin received a low vision evaluation from Marshall Flax, and he learned about how magnification can help him make the most of his remaining vision. Both received free white canes from us and orientation and mobility training from Kay Rhode. "Now, we can confidently make our way to the main office of the apartment complex as well as to the nearby gas station and supermarket," said Justin appreciatively.

Vision rehabilitation teacher Jean Kalscheur visits Rhonda and Justin from time to time, and she always finds ways to help the couple. Along with an early intervention teacher from Social Services, she has worked with the couple on baby care, including bathing and marking baby care products. She also got Rhonda and Justin some adaptive products for their new apartment and shared information about the Talking Books program, distance learning opportunities through Hadley School for the Blind, and information on computer software, as both Rhonda and Justin are skilled technology consumers.

What gives Justin and Rhonda hope for the future? "We don't let blindness and vision impairment limit us. We can move forward with our lives because of our accomplishments in the past."

## 2009 CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kathleen Brockman, Milwaukee  
Mark Carris, Fond du Lac  
Neil M. Ford, Lodi  
Nona Graves, West Allis (Secretary)  
Scott Hegle, Waukesha  
Richard Johnson, Janesville  
Kathy Kent, Milwaukee  
Kathy Lueders, Milwaukee  
Kay Malmquist, Janesville  
Bruce Parkinson, Two Rivers  
Dan Sippl, Eau Claire

Rhonda Staats, La Crosse  
Gary M. Traynor, Eau Claire  
Arnold Tucker, Park Falls (Treasurer)  
Ed Weiss, Waukesha  
Becky Williams, Milwaukee  
(Vice President)  
Chris Zenchenko, Evansville (President)  
Patty Zallar, Madison  
Sarah Zellmer, West Allis  
Karen V. Majkrzak  
Executive Director

## COUNCIL 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\*  
Grants Coordinator

Deda Oatsvall  
Finance & Benefits

Connie Pagel\*  
Customer Service & Sharper Vision Store

Brent Perzentka  
Sharper Vision Store Management

Judith Rasmussen  
Customer Service & Braille

(\* indicates part-time position)

## Voices of Independence

"Here I was—in the middle of my life—with a family and a mortgage—and I needed to return to school so I could change careers. The Council's scholarships helped me deal with this challenge." - Doug M.

"Although some days are more difficult than others in facing and dealing with my vision loss, my life is very joyful and rewarding. I credit the Council not only for providing me with visual aids for daily living, but also for helping me know that I can still lead a full and happy life." - Jenny M.

"Items like the bright orange touch dots help me manage everyday activities, like cooking and making phone calls. I was so impressed, that I told others about what the Council provides and how these items help me maintain my independence and continue to do many of the things I enjoy."

Susan C.

