

**Gary's Story of Independence**

Gary D. from Baraboo was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) in 1982. Between 1995 and 2000, his RP progressed to the point that he couldn't see faces or distinguish colors. "I had to quit my job of 21 years and seek help so I could adjust to my vision loss." Gary turned to the Council and discovered a goldmine of resources.



A white cane and orientation and mobility training from the Council gave Gary the independence and confidence he needed to continue his very active life. He also received assistive technology training from our staff that enhanced his ability to communicate with his new work clients.

Gary is just one example of the people the Council helps, day in and day out. We are able to provide these and other free or low-cost services thanks to contributions from friends and supporters.

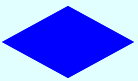
Our mission is to promote the dignity and independence of people in Wisconsin who are blind and visually impaired by providing services, advocating legislation, and educating the general public.

 754 Williamson Street  
Madison, WI 53703-3546

• W I S C O N S I N  
• C O U N C I L O F T H E B L I N D  
• & V I S U A L L Y I M P A I R E D

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

# 2009 Annual Report



## PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE



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)

*Providing vision without sight*

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND  
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED, INC.

Overview of Financial Position December 31, 2008 and 2009 from Audit Report (\*)

Statement of Activities	2009	2008
Contributions/Grants	264,919	237,165
Bequests	111,471	60,303
<b>Program Revenue</b>		
Sharper Vision Store	123,464	120,229
Vision Services	2,403	4,023
Rental Income	13,400	13,100
Miscellaneous	67,547	19,192
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	583,204	454,012
Investment Income (loss)	1,050,174	(1,058,586)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	1,633,378	(604,574)
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Vision Rehabilitation	176,609	157,551
Education	181,834	180,548
Community Services	119,305	97,899
Business Loans	38,740	40,856
Sharper Vision Store	204,311	240,289
docuScan	118,788	-0-
Philanthropy	128,983	128,201
Management/General	257,750	240,014
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	1,226,320	1,085,358
Change in Net Assets	407,058	(1,689,932)
Net assets beginning of year	7,290,076	8,980,008
<b>Net assets end of year</b>	7,697,134	7,290,076

(\*) to request a copy of the 2009 audit, prepared by Wegner LLP, CPAs, call the Executive Director at 608-237-8103.

2009 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)  
Patty Zallar, Madison  
Sarah Zellmer, West Allis  
Chris Zenchenko, Evansville (President)  
Karen Majkrzak, Executive Director

2009 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 & Orientation  
& Mobility Training  
Fred Gluck\*  
Technology Assistant  
Gary Goyke  
Marketing/Public Relations and  
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 & Brailist  
(\*) indicates part-time position

Copies of this report are available to the public.

Dear Friends,

Promoting independence...it's what we do every day at the Council, and it's what we have done for 58 years, for Wisconsin residents who are blind or visually impaired.

People from every walk of life and from every part of the state turn to the Council for help and hope. By 2030, the estimated number of visually impaired Americans 65 and older will double to seven million. In Wisconsin alone, a National Institutes of Health survey notes that there are approximately 100,000 blind and visually impaired individuals. As our population ages, the demand for our free and low-cost services will grow dramatically.

We remain committed to providing powerful tools for independence. As a private, non-profit organization, our mission is paramount to who we are. This annual report shares with you our impact in Wisconsin, the services we offer, and how we change lives for people with low or no vision.

To learn more about our mission and vision and ways you can support them, we encourage you to visit [www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org) or call 608-255-1166.

Thank you for your generosity and confidence in our work!

Sincerely,

Christopher Zenchenko  
Council President

Loretta A. Himmelsbach  
Executive Director

2009 PROGRAM STATISTICS

The Council continues to make a visible difference in the lives of people in Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired.

Here is a summary of the Council’s programs in 2009:

7,355	The number of people served by the Council
3,001	The number of customers in our Sharper Vision Store
738	People who received computer technology training or advice
321	Number of rehabilitation training home visits
2,469	People who attended Council-sponsored seminars, programs and presentations
599	White Canes distributed throughout Wisconsin
170	Low vision evaluations administered
57	Clients who received orientation and mobility training
223	Hours spent advocating on behalf of the blind and visually impaired in Wisconsin
2,162	Volunteer hours donated by our friends and supporters for special events, mailings, meetings, publications, committee work, and outreach
24,962	Miles logged by Council members and staff for programs, services and advocacy
639,156	Number of website “hits”



Legislative Advocacy

Legislative advocacy has been a cornerstone of the Council’s mission since its founding in 1952. Our Legislative Committee advocates for Wisconsin citizens who are blind or visually impaired on issues involving local, state and federal rules, regulations, initiatives, policies and legislative proposals.

Education

The Council coordinates a Speaker’s Bureau, and we always appreciate the opportunity to share information and insights about blindness or vision loss. Educational presentations are at no cost to schools, community organizations, low vision support groups, churches, clubs and a wide variety of other organizations.

Scholarships to Support Educational Goals

The Council awards seven \$1,500 and two \$1,000 scholarships each year to high school graduates who are legally blind and enrolled part- or full-time in a college or vocational/community school. Scholarship information and applications are posted at [www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org).

docuScan of Wisconsin

**docuScan of Wisconsin** is a full-service document scanning company with expertise in converting paper documents to electronic images. It is a program under the nonprofit umbrella of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired. **docuScan of Wisconsin** will assist the Council financially and allow us to continue and expand services to Wisconsin residents who are blind and visually impaired, while providing a high-quality professional service to area businesses and nonprofits. Contact: Rod Keyeski, Sales Manager, [rkeyeski@docuScanWI.com](mailto:rkeyeski@docuScanWI.com); 608-237-8113.



Free White Canes

Persons who are blind or visually impaired are eligible to receive one free white cane a year from the Council. Canes include mobility canes (use requires training), support canes, and ID canes (short cane that is held out to let others know you have a vision problem). All canes are available — rigid or folding.

**Vision Services**

**Low Vision Services**

Through a low vision evaluation, individuals learn how to maximize their remaining vision and use lighting effectively for reading and other near-vision tasks. An evaluation includes:

- Assessment of visual abilities.
- Instruction in the use of residual vision.
- Application of optical and non-optical aids for daily living, leisure, social, vocational and educational tasks.
- Information about lighting, magnification, and color and contrast to support remaining vision.

A stipend may be available to help with transportation costs to Madison for a low vision evaluation.

Contact: Marshall Flax, Certified Low Vision Therapist, Marshall@wcblind.org; 608-237-8107 (questions); 608-263-7171 (to schedule an appointment).

**Vision Rehabilitation Services**

With the guidance of a vision rehab specialist, individuals learn to live with confidence and independence through strategies and techniques, adaptive products or assistive technologies, and/or environmental adaptations. Services include ways to:

- Live and work safely and independently.
- Modify one’s environment and use compensatory techniques and adaptive products to enhance daily living activities (personal care, reading, writing, communication, home management, leisure, social, vocational, and educational tasks).
- Locate and utilize community resources.
- Adjust to changing vision.

Contact: Jean Kalscheur, Vision Rehabilitation Teacher, Jean@wcblind.org; 608-237-8106.

**Orientation and Mobility**

Orientation is knowing where you are, where you’ve been, and where you’re going. Mobility is the set of physical skills required to move through the environment. Orientation and mobility services teach how to travel safely and as independently as possible. They include:

- Techniques to orient one’s self in space and plan movement options.
- Instruction in safe and independent travel skills.
- Use of white cane for indoor and outdoor travel.
- Use of public transportation.
- Orientation to routes to and from home, community locations, work, or school.

Contact: Marshall Flax, Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist, Marshall@wcblind.org; 608-237-8107.



**Assistive Technology Services**

Assistive technology services include assessment and training in technologies that support work site placement and adjustment. They include:

- Comprehensive assistive technology assessment.
- Individual training in assistive technology done at the Council’s office, in the home, or at one’s work place.

Contact: Betsy Gruba, Director of Technology, Betsy@wcblind.org; 608-237-8112.

**Web Design Services for Accessible Websites**

The Council provides consulting and design services for organizations that are designing or improving their websites to meet the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act — the requirement by Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Contact: Betsy Gruba, Director of Technology, Betsy@wcblind.org; 608-237-8112.

**Sharper Vision Store**

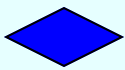
Assistive products are items that make everyday tasks a little easier for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. From stylish watches, to talking alarm clocks, from kitchen tools to magnifying devices, the store carries more than 400 products that help people live with greater confidence and independence. Located within our office building on Williamson Street in Madison, the store is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We also offer the convenience of online shopping at <http://shop.wcblind.org>.

*“I couldn’t live without my watch! I’m very active, and I need to know what time it is, so I’m ready for rides.”*

—Barbra W., Madison

*“The store staff are so knowledgeable and helpful, and they can tailor products to my needs.”*

—Barbara S., Cross Plains



**At the Sharper Vision Store, every product we have is on display, so customers can see and try items that interest them.**