

December 2023

Dear

My name is Ellen and I am living with vision loss. As an infant and young child, I lost the sight in one eye from a genetic condition. Neither my parents nor I understood that the genetics would soon affect my other eye. I didn't know I would lose night vision, would be unable to see faces, or not be able to read text in books or on a computer screen.

Thankfully, my employer was thorough and creative in providing accommodations that allowed me to continue working. They identified services offered by the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired as crucial to continuing my career.

My visits to the Council opened a new world for work, home, and even hobbies I had enjoyed before vision loss. Certified Low Vision Therapist Amy Wurf introduced me to magnification and lighting adaptations I didn't know existed. Reading daily correspondence and mailings was possible again!

A meeting with Access Technology Specialist Jim Denham introduced me to the accessibility features of laptops, tablets and iPhones. I could write manuscripts again!

Both Amy and Jim opened my mind's eye to the concept of "finding a way" rather than abandoning what I loved to do at work and at home.

They also introduced the idea of attending a Birding by Ear class. Before vision loss, I had become an enthusiastic amateur birdwatcher, which became impossible when my vision worsened,

or so I thought. Through Birding by Ear, my partner Jon and I learned to identify birds by their calls, songs, or body sounds. I soon discovered there were warblers migrating through my neighborhood!

Reading through Council newsletters, I learned the many facets of the Council's work. From vision services to advocacy and educational events, the Council is a go-to resource for anyone in Wisconsin who is living with vision loss.

At this time of year, I focus my thoughts and actions on giving thanks for the gifts I've received. For the last several years, my thanks have extended to the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired.

Because of the Council, my misperceptions about my ongoing visual loss have been corrected. I have met outstanding people who have broadened my world, and I have discovered new adaptations for work and play. Gratitude is an inadequate word for my experiences with the Council!

If you work with someone with visual impairment, or have a family member or friend experiencing vision loss, I hope this season of thanks moves you to explore the opportunities the Council offers and to support their efforts with your financial gift.

Gratefully,



Ellen L. Connor

From the Council...Thank you to Ellen for sharing her personal story of vision loss and her journey to acceptance.

Your donation will enable Council staff to help hundreds more people like her. Please consider making a tax deductible gift by mailing it in the enclosed envelope or give securely online at [WCBlind.org](http://WCBlind.org).

Thank you!