

May 2026

Dear friend,

Feeling safe, independent and connected is something many of us take for granted. We step off a curb, cross a street to get to the grocery store or meet a friend at a coffee shop without a second thought. But for someone blind or low vision, navigating those same moments can lead to feelings of uncertainty and risk. And when the world starts to feel risky, they may begin to limit how often they go out.

When that happens, the losses multiply. Staying home can feel like the safer choice, but it comes with its own risks. **Inactivity increases the likelihood of falls, even indoors.** Doctor's appointments get missed. Healthy food options become harder to access. And as connections to friends, community and work begin to fade, the world quietly grows smaller. For many blind and low vision adults, that narrowing can mean the end of employment, not because of ability, but because barriers make participation difficult. What begins as a safety concern can slowly turn into isolation and financial strain. Research confirms that without access and opportunity, **blind and low vision adults are more likely to experience economic insecurity**, which is in turn linked to higher rates of depression and poorer overall health.

We know that's something we can change.

Throughout the Council's history, **the White Cane Fund has helped transform uncertainty into mobility and confidence** by providing white canes at no cost to people across Wisconsin. At home, a white cane helps users find doorways, furniture and changes in flooring. Out in the world, a white cane detects curbs, cracks and other obstacles before they become dangers. It extends a person's awareness of the world around them,

creating a few extra seconds to react, adjust and move with confidence. **It increases visibility to drivers.** And it signals to the world that they are navigating with purpose and intent.

But what truly makes mobility safer is the training that accompanies the cane. **Through professional orientation and mobility training, people gain the skills and confidence** to move through the world without fear.

That confidence opens the door to everyday experiences that keep people connected to their community. Keeping a doctor's appointment. Meeting a friend for lunch. Walking to the mailbox and stopping to chat with a neighbor. **It also empowers them to stay employed and travel to work independently.** These are not small things.

Your gift to the White Cane Fund puts a white cane in someone's hand and provides the skilled instruction that turns a tool into a pathway back to the neighborhood, back to the people they love, back to the life that brings them meaning.

Help make that pathway possible by supporting the White Cane Fund today. You'll be supporting pedestrian safety and the independence, connection and dignity it makes possible.

With gratitude,



Denise Jess
Executive Director



Debbie Rasmussen
Development Director

P.S. Starting in 2026, most donors can deduct charitable gifts whether or not they itemize, up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for couples — a small change that makes giving easier.

75 Monthly Donors by our 75th Anniversary

As we prepare to celebrate the Council's 75th anniversary next year, we're working toward a meaningful goal: 75 monthly donors who help sustain our work all year long.

Today, **41 monthly donors** provide steady support for white canes and the training to use them effectively.

That consistency makes all the difference.

Will you join us in growing our community of monthly donors as we head into our 75th year?

We're grateful for every gift, whether given monthly or in another way.
Donate or learn more about ways to give at **WCBlind.org/donate** or **800-783-5213**.

Before receiving a white cane, stairs were terrifying for 22-year-old Bridgette. "I couldn't tell where one step ended and another began," she says. "They looked flat, like a runway."

Her mom remembers how careful Bridgette had to be. "She was afraid to go out in the world."

After receiving her cane and with just one orientation and mobility training session, everything changed.

"I used to constantly look at the ground to keep from falling," Bridgette says. "My neck would ache from the strain."

Now, with her white cane, she feels confident navigating safely on her own.

"I keep my head up now. I can take in what's around me, like the birds and the trees. It's been life-changing!"



**Wisconsin Council of the
Blind & Visually Impaired**

WCBlind.org/donate