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# ANNUAL REPORT

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# MISSION PROMISES



[sightcenternwpa.org](http://sightcenternwpa.org)

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LINDA MOORE



Dear Friends,

**Do you know these names?** Gus Pulakos, Samuel P. Black, Sr., Dr. Donald H. Smith, Fred McBrier, Mrs. Harry Schall, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Leslie....They certainly sound familiar, don't they? These are some of the names of the very first board of directors of the Sight Center of NW PA, known in 1938 as PA Association for the Blind, Erie Branch. While the names of board members have changed over 86 years, the mission of the Center has remained the same: *to prevent blindness and promote independence for those who are blind or visually impaired.*

These commitments are our "mission promises." Countless board, management, and staff members have passed through the doors of the Center in our 86 years, but these promises are still the foundation of everything we do in this community - yesterday, today, and always.

“

**Board of Directors:  
Protector and Steward of  
the Mission Promises.  
Protector for Today;  
Steward for Tomorrow.”**

I hope you enjoy peeking into the past fiscal year and seeing how our mission promises have been kept. Won't you also take a look at the list at the bottom of this page, and help me thank today's board, as well as the many boards of the past, for being the protectors and stewards of such important promises?

Thank you for your interest in the Sight Center and for YOUR part - whatever that may be - in keeping our promises.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Moore,  
CEO/Executive Director

## Board of Directors 2023/24

Doug Starr, **Chair** - *President, ECCA*

Mike Ruzzi, **Vice Chair** - *Anchor, Erie News Now*

Anne Piotrowicz, **Treasurer** - *Retired Financial Analyst, GE*

Joey DeMartino, **Secretary** - *Senior Bank Consultant*

Tom Pysz, **Immediate Past Chair** - *Host, We Question and Learn (WQLN)*

Anthony Angelone, Esq. - *Nietupski Angelone, LLC*

Vanessa Roddy Baran - *Retired School Administrator*

Jacque Caringola, OD - *Gahring Optical*

Maria Gartell - *Realtor, Owner, Vintage & Soul Home*

Pauline Gonda - *President, Gonda Media*

Mark Papalia - *President, UPMC Kane Hospital*

Ned Reade, Retired - *Owner, Networking Technologies Inc.*

**Emeritus Directors** | Thorp Andrews | Nicholas Sala, DO | Barry Stamm, MD | Roger Taft, Esq. | William Vorsheck

# TRANSPORTATION AND SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Independence is achieved or maintained, and quality of life is improved for those with vision loss or blindness through the support of the Sight Center Specialized Services program and individualized case management.

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ Case management staff made thousands of contacts with our clients and community members for referrals to additional support services this fiscal year. Having a well-established network of partnerships to receive and make referrals across our seven-county geography has a major impact on the continuum of care for individuals in need.
- ♦ We accepted donations of low vision assistive equipment that our agency can redistribute to benefit other clients in need. A waiting list is in place for quick turnaround and immediate re-allocation!
- ♦ Assistive technology is so much more advanced than a magnifying glass or cell phone. The Sight Center supports client training on equipment and software to help impact their safety and independence and provide better access to the world.
- ♦ Continuing to expand the professionally run support groups (Clubs) that help participants learn technology and adaptations for daily living, to follow their passions and create new ones, and most importantly, have the confidence and resources to be independent and fulfilled.

## THIS YEAR

201 2,395 3,280

### INDIVIDUALS

received services including life skills education, social work, and transportation

### HOURS

spent to improve the quality of life for families affected by low vision

### HOURS

spent to assure clients get to essential medical appointments safely

- ♦ We implemented a quarterly Speaker Series focused on vision, eye health, orientation and mobility, rehabilitation, assistive technology, and pertinent topics for clients with low vision.
- ♦ Gannon University Occupational Therapy students brought a wellness program to the Sight Center. The focus was on embracing a healthy lifestyle, which is not just about the body, it is also about finding harmony, calmness, and uplifting your spirit.

## PREVENTIVE SCREENING

Early intervention allows time for eyecare professionals to diagnose and successfully treat conditions that can lead to blindness if not treated before age eight.

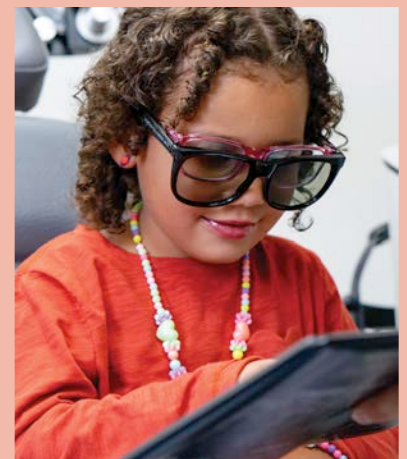
For children trying to grow and thrive in a learning environment, the senses must be fully engaged to keep up and succeed. With one sense not fully engaged, especially a sense as vital as vision, any child will struggle to learn.

## THE SIGHT CENTER IS COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Being accessible to daycares, pre-schools, and kindergarten classes to provide vision screenings

All children who fail a screening will be referred for professional eye care

Follow-ups will occur with 100% of the families of children who were referred to eyecare professionals at 30, 60 and 90 days



**1718**  
CHILDREN  
SCREENED



**138**  
REFERRED  
TO EYE CARE  
PROFESSIONALS



**100+**  
HOURS OF CASE  
MANAGEMENT



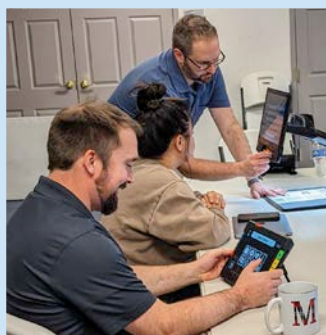
**16**  
EYE HEALTH &  
SAFETY EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS



**386**  
TOTAL YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS



Navaeh and Jasmine after a magnificent performance of our National Anthem.



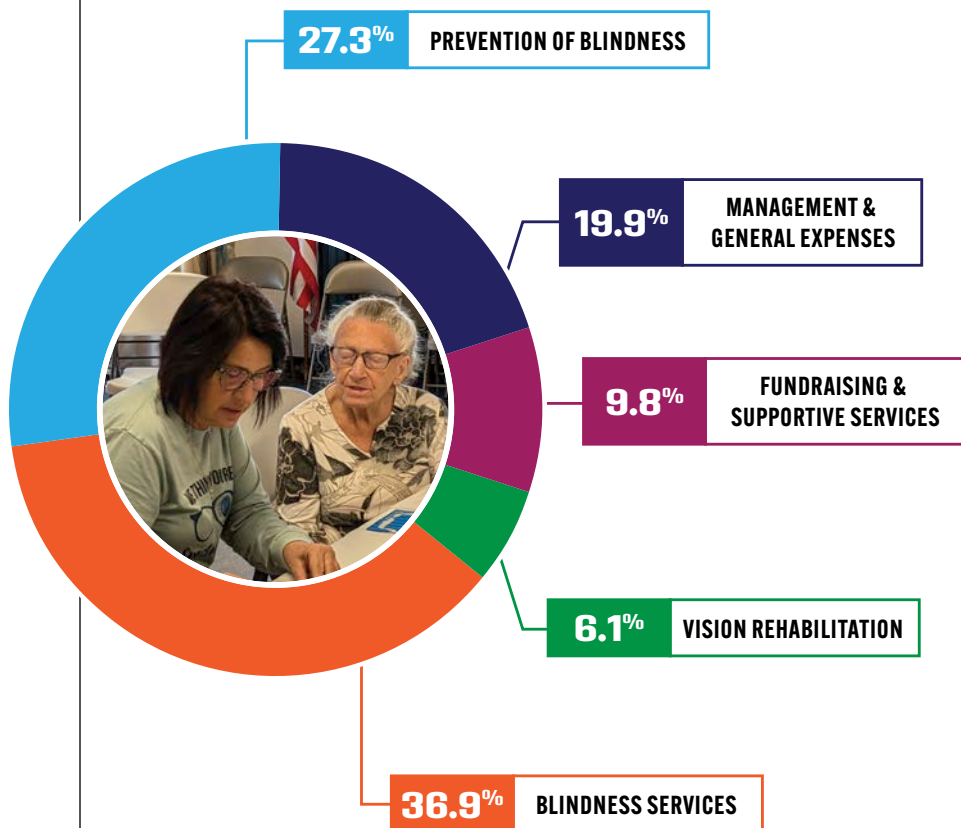
So many different of magn one could next tre

What device or technique will help you live your best life?



# MISS PROMISES

OVERALL AGENCY EXPENSES: \$1,096,066



Guide dog Nia fulfilling her vital mission.

“ Trust in an organ foundation of pro



many  
nt types  
nifiers;  
d be your  
asure!



Teamwork helps  
Elaine see if our  
Max-Detail glasses  
will help her read  
more clearly.



# VISION FULFILLED

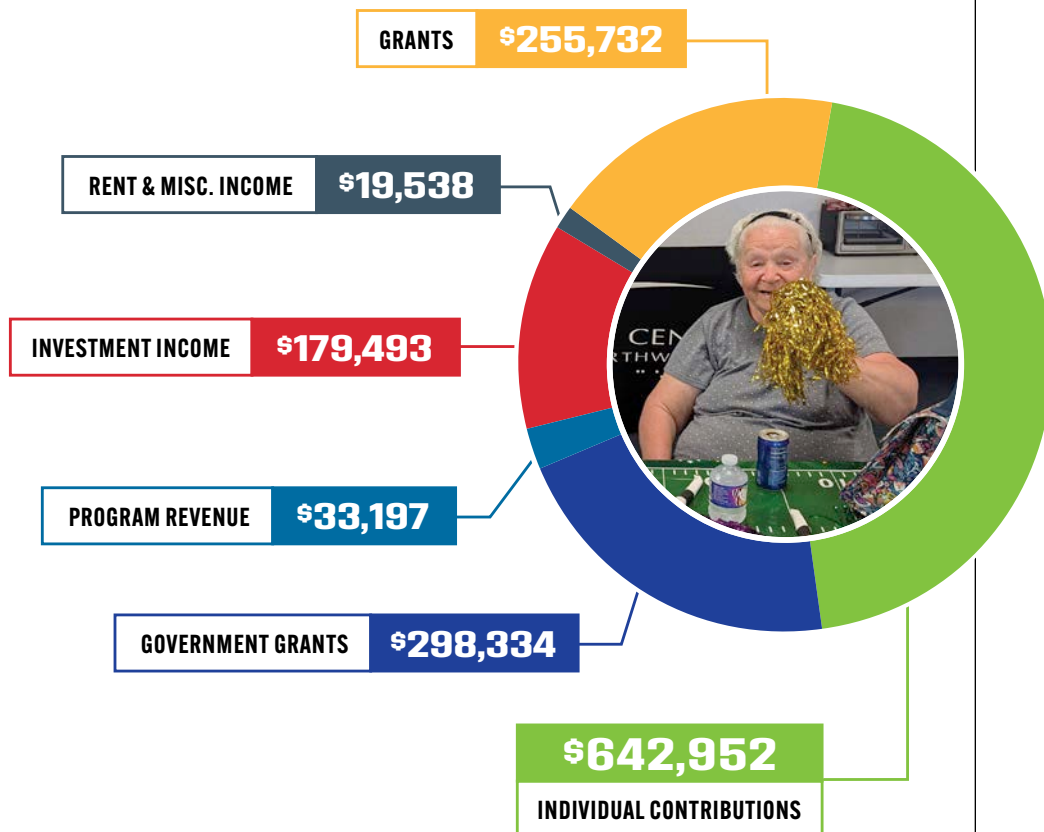


Azaria proudly  
sports new violet  
tint glasses to  
address her  
specific visual  
impairment.

Our  
social bonds  
promote  
well-being.



**TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE: \$1,429,246**



ization is built on a  
omises kept.” - Doug Starr

# NATIONAL DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Sight Center prevents blindness by offering the evidence-based National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) to those considered at risk for type 2 diabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of severe and permanent vision loss in working-age individuals.

Participants learn tips, strategies, and skills to help meet personal weight loss goals and increase their level of physical activity. These lifestyle changes significantly improve overall health and well-being and are key to preventing, delaying, and reversing the onset of type 2 diabetes. The NDPP's year-long program provides ongoing coaching, peer support and accountability.

Staff members participated in community events to raise awareness, engage medical providers, and recruit participants.



**410+ HOURS**  
of educational  
& informational  
activities

**1,800 RISK  
ASSESSMENTS**  
implemented on  
high-risk individuals

**1 IN 3 ADULT  
AMERICANS**  
has pre-diabetes  
and does  
not know it

- ◆ The Sight Center has maintained full recognition from the CDC, indicating that all requirements were met and that our program is an effective means to prevent type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ The Sight Center is 30% above the minimum requirement for participant retention.

## OUR VISION FOR THE NATIONAL DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Every person is aware of their risk for type 2 diabetes, has access to prevention education and lifestyle change resources, and never loses their sight.

**Type 2  
could be you**  
PA DIABETES PREVENTION  
AND EDUCATION

## THIS YEAR

**165**

### INDIVIDUALS SERVED

A steady increase from the prior fiscal year's NDPP program and our greatest number of participants since the inception.

**36%**

### REPORTED A PHYSICAL DISABILITY OR HEARING/ VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

This number is on the rise!





# DISCOVER WELLNESS WITH US!



The Sight Center of Northwest PA and Gannon University Occupational Therapy Program (OTP) entered a wellness partnership promoting a shared vision of wellness and independence for those with vision loss and those who are blind. Simple exercises were introduced to do at home without fancy gym equipment. We focused on embracing a healthy lifestyle, finding harmony, calmness and uplifting our spirits. Healthy eating and other wellness topics were in the spotlight to nurture overall well-being for our Sight Center clients through Wednesday Club.

In turn, each session challenged the Gannon OTP students to be effective group leaders and use listening and other communication skills for team building and collaboration. Clients taught the students to have a greater appreciation for the lived experiences and challenges of low vision

and they formed a better understanding for their future role as occupational therapists.

“The laughter, caring for others, and the sense of community help us continually grow as health care professionals. The Sight Center team's enthusiastic, creative, and thoughtful approach to engaging older adults in healthy living inspires us,” said David LeVan, DHSc., OTR/L Professor.

This unique wellness program went over so well that we are planning for a new session in the fall that focuses on balance and fall-prevention - specifically geared for visually impaired individuals. Then we will have a new group of students who, under the leadership of Associate Professor Nicole Lavery, OTD, OTR/L, and David LeVan will create and submit a plan for our Spring Wellness endeavor!

**JOIN THE WEDNESDAY CLUB FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS!**



# TRUST PARTNERSHIP IMPACT EMPOWER GROWTH SUPPORT PURPOSE WORK

## OUR PARTNERS

Partnerships help us build strength in the communities we serve, elevate our level of service, and collaborate in the continuum of care for those with vision impairments.



## WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS:

Active Aging Center, Crawford County's  
Area Agency of Aging

Adagio Health

Aetna Medicare Advantage

Allegheny Health Network

American Heart Association

AmeriHealth Caritas Health Plan

Blue Zone Project

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Corry Library

Corry Memorial Hospital

Crawford County Area of Aging

Dan Laughlin, PA State Senator

ECCA Payroll

Erie Community Foundation

Erie Insurance

Erie Retina Research Group

GECAC

Highmark & Highmark Foundation

Highmark Whole Care

Intermediate Unit 5- Erie County (IU-5)

Joe Schember, City of Erie Mayor

Meadville Area Free Clinic

Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program/  
Medicaid Diabetes Prevention Program

Mercyhurst University

Multiple Primary Care Physicians  
and Endocrinologists

National Association of Chronic  
Disease Directors

Nonprofit Partnership

Our Lady of the Lake Church

PA Bureau of Blindness and  
Visual Services (BBVS)

PA Health Promotion Council

Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit  
Organizations

Pivot X

Quality Insights

Relevant Church

Ryan Bizzarro, PA House of  
Representatives

Second Harvest Food Bank

UPMC

Venango Association for the Blind

Wal-Mart/Wal-Mart Pharmacy

Warren Area Agency of Aging

Warren General Hospital

## THE SIGHT CENTER OF NWPA - 2024 STAFF

### Linda J. Moore

Executive Director

### Lana Kunik

Director of Diabetes Prevention

### Pam Masi

Director of Operations

### Susan McNeish

Group Services Coordinator

### Kathleen Mosier

Executive Assistant

### Mason Reininger

Case Manager

### Michael Redinger

Transportation Coordinator

### Rebecca Swick

LC, MPA, LPN, BSW Outreach  
Coordinator

### Beth Cage

Low Vision | Lifestyle Coach,  
National Diabetes Prevention Program

### Kim Flatt

Vision Screener | Lifestyle Coach,  
National Diabetes Prevention Program

### Tabitha Roark

Vision Screener | Lifestyle Coach,  
National Diabetes Prevention Program

### Carole Brosius

Vision Screener/Driver

### Allen Erickson

Services Aide/Driver

### Ruthann Johnston

Services Aide/Driver

### George Savko

Services Aide/Driver

### David Way

Services Aide/Driver