

EyePower *Summer 2005*

News and Information from the Low Vision Center

EyePower

by Bill Rolle, Executive Director
Low Vision Center

We're proud to report in this issue on several successes we've had in getting businesses to recognize the Center and the services we provide to those with low vision. In some cases, these successes have resulted in generous donations to the Center. We greatly appreciate those gifts and encourage you to support the places making the donations.

Take a few moments to read the piece on "Acceptance". We continually hear from clients who have been recently diagnosed with a disease that has caused them to become visually impaired. They find it difficult to accept and tend to lose their zest for life. We believe the article may assist those people to revisit their negative feelings and get back on the road to feeling better about life. We hope you agree.

We love to hear from you, so please give us your comments on the newsletter. We need to know what you found worth reading and what you might like to see in future issues. Also, call us at 301-951-4444 if you would like to have a copy of the Lighthouse International article dealing with acceptance. Thank you.



Acceptance

Lighthouse International had an excellent article in its Fall 2003 newsletter that dealt with the **importance of accepting vision loss** for both psychological and functional well-being. Their research found that visually impaired people who accept their condition are less likely to be depressed and more likely to use vision rehabilitation services to help them maintain their lifestyles and daily activities.

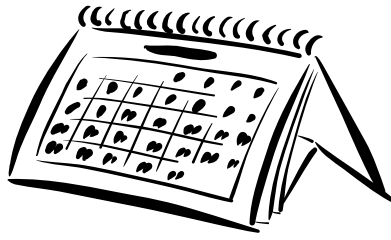
Acceptance can range from willingly receiving something to enduring something without protest or reaction. Spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle says in his book **The Power of Now** that we have only three options when we find our situations intolerable: remove oneself from the situation, change it or accept it. One person stated in the Lighthouse article "accepting vision loss is turning loose of the past – releasing yourself from what was, turning to what is and learning to do things differently."

The article listed **attitude, maintaining activities, peer and family support and faith** as factors that help one cope with vision loss.

However, the Lighthouse article pointed out that accepting vision loss is an ongoing process, not a "done deal". It takes a lot of patience and a sense of humor can be very helpful.

Save the Date

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 5, 2005



so that you can plan to attend a narrated opera presented by Montgomery County's National Philharmonic at the recently built Music Center at Strathmore. The Philharmonic management has committed to donate ten percent of each single ticket sale for that performance to the Low Vision Center so that we may continue to help those visually impaired to maximize their remaining sight. Please call 301-493-9283 ext. 111 for details on the performance and to purchase tickets.

Low Vision Phone Support

We recognize that not everyone who has the need to visit our Center has the capability to get here. So, we have identified several visually impaired clients who have agreed to speak by phone with other clients, concerning low vision issues that they may be currently experiencing. Call the **Low Vision Center at 301-951-4444** if you are homebound and have the need to discuss a low vision issue. We will take your name and phone number and pass it on to one of our client volunteers who will call you to discuss the issue. We have categorized each of our client volunteers by low vision experience. The experiences include those who continue to work; those who have developed a positive mental attitude and one who has mastered access to government services. Please call the Center, as the volunteers are anxious to help you.

Low Vision Supporters

Management at the **Seneca Wellness and Fitness Center** in Montgomery County, Maryland, recently made a generous contribution to the Low Vision Center (LVC). This demonstrates their interest in assisting visually impaired people and showing their support for LVC. Seneca asked LVC to review their wellness and fitness operation to identify ways to make it more "vision friendly". We did and they are.

Management at the **Social List of Washington**, often referred to as The Green Book, has committed to donate a percentage of the 2006 Book's sales to the Low Vision Center. The 2006 Book is scheduled for publication in September 2006 and will be the Book's 75th edition. Call the Green Book office today at 301-949-7544 to order a copy of the 2006 Book.

Management at **Payroll Network** reported on the Low Vision Center and its services in a recent newsletter that is e-mailed to 10,000 clients and friends. That makes quite a few more people aware of who we are and what we do.

Tom Sietsema, **Washington Post Sunday Magazine Dining Critic**, recently reported on the Low Vision Center's offer to assist restaurants and other businesses to become more "vision friendly". We'll visit any restaurant, whose management invites us, and do a no cost, non-threatening review of how vision friendly the restaurant is. We'll then provide that restaurant operator with easy to accomplish suggestions on how to make the facility easier for visually impaired people to use. Next time you dine out, ask the proprietor if he or she has an interest in having the Center do

a "vision friendly" review. Our objective is to make it easier for those with low vision to have a more pleasant dining out experience.

Management at the **Maryland Optometric Association** (MOA) generously agreed to run an advertisement in their monthly journal, at no cost to the Low Vision Center, in which we advertised for a volunteer Optometrist to assist the Center with our large demand for client visits. The MOA is an organization dedicated to safeguarding the eye health of Maryland citizens. The Association and its affiliate doctors aim to bring eye care to Maryland's citizens at the highest level.



There's a Way With a Will

Everyone should have a Will or estate plan so that his or her assets are correctly and efficiently distributed following their deaths. Please contact an attorney should you currently be without that legal protection. You can also insure the Low Vision Center's continued operation by including a donation to the Center in you Will. Just mention to your attorney that you prefer to have a **portion of your estate donated to the Low Vision Center**. Any sum will be welcome and greatly appreciated. We continue to provide services to the visually impaired because of clients' generous gifts.

Volunteer Needed

It currently takes about three weeks for a client to have an appointment with our trained counselor. We prefer to shorten that time frame to no more than one week. We would like to have an **eye care professional, volunteer his or her time or we can train a dedicated lay person to serve as a volunteer** to conduct hands-on, free demonstrations of low vision aids in a home-like setting. Please call the Low Vision Center at 301-951-4444 to discuss how you might help us solve this difficult problem or if you know someone who would make an excellent volunteer.

AMD Program Helps with Life

January 2005 issue of *Archives of Ophthalmology* reported on results of a six-month follow up of an age-related macular degeneration (AMD) self-management program. Program consisted of health education and enhancement of problem-solving skills in improving quality of life as shown by measures of mood and function. There were 214 older adult volunteers (mean age of 80 years) who have advanced AMD. They were randomly assigned to a 12-hour, self-management program, or a series of 12 hours of tape-recorded health lectures or a waiting list. At the six month follow up, participants in the self-management program reported significantly **less emotional distress, better function and increased self-efficacy** compared with those using the tape-recorded health lectures and on the waiting list.

Let's Hear From You



Let us know the places where you shop or visit that you have found to be **"vision friendly"**. We'll share them with the others on our newsletter list. This information will help those who are visually impaired and may encourage those places who are not vision friendly to convert to become more so. It could prove to be a benefit for all concerned.

Respect For Privacy

We protect the privacy of our clients and donors. All information pertaining to them is kept strictly confidential and never released to another party. Your **information is safe** with the Low Vision Center.



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**LOW VISION
CENTER**

Winning Ideas for Failing Sight

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Free Matter for
the Blind
Handle as First
Class Mail