

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED



Established in 1929, CABVI is a not-for-profit agency that serves people who are blind or visually impaired, from newborns to the elderly, usually at no charge.

We offer comprehensive vision rehabilitation, employment, and technology services personally tailored to people with visual impairments.

Our mission is to assist people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve their highest levels of independence.

OUR MESSAGE

This year marks eighty years of operations for the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. We've grown from serving just a few dozen blind people in Utica to providing comprehensive vision rehabilitation services to consumers of all ages throughout eight counties of central New York. Add the nationally recognized employment opportunities CABVI provides to people who are blind or visually impaired and you can understand why we take great pride in our accomplishments.

That is why we are pleased to present the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired's 2008 Annual Report. We do not simply recite cold statistics. In these pages you will meet consumers whose lives are enriched beyond their greatest hope thanks to our experienced staff of vision rehabilitation professionals.

We've seen older consumers with macular degeneration read again—the result of low vision examinations and close attention paid to their needs.

Many working-aged people with visual impairment, who feared they could never find employment, now work beside their sighted peers at CABVI. Customers from across the country rely on the variety of merchandise they produce. Our employees earn a competitive wage, good benefits and the satisfaction of a job well done.

School-age kids receive specialized lessons in the classroom or, for those still too young, instruction

at home from CABVI's Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The agency supervises thousands of vision screenings for preschool children, identifying and providing follow-up examinations to hundreds with preventable vision problems.

In 2008 CABVI committed to an aggressive outreach campaign across our eight county service area tirelessly pursuing our mission: **To assist people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve their highest levels of independence.** We've spread the message of our vision rehabilitation services and employment opportunities at dozens of senior centers, community meetings, health fairs and health centers.

CABVI took a more prominent role in the community in 2008. Numerous employees have joined service organizations like the Lions Clubs in their hometowns. We staffed a water stop on the Boilermaker Road Race course. We've coached baseball, soccer, football, cheer-leading, and a host of youth programs.

We are humbled to have the support of strong volunteers and a generous public. You have recognized the great challenges faced by people who are blind or visually impaired and stepped forward to serve on our boards of directors, provide preschool vision screenings or make a generous donation.

On behalf of the consumers, directors and wonderful employees of CABVI, thank you for the confidence that makes a difference in the lives of so many people.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rudy D'Amico".

Rudy D'Amico
President and CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Drejza".

Paul Drejza
Chairman of the Board



CABVI Low Vision Specialists, Dr. Allen Zuck and Dr. John Janovsky.

OUR SERVICES

Independent Living Skills

Programs help people manage personal care, health needs, meal preparation and household finances independently in their homes. All counseling and rehabilitation services are coordinated to ensure the highest quality consumer assistance and advocacy.

In 2008, served 502 individuals.

Orientation and Mobility

Professionals teach consumers how to determine their location and travel safely in the home, school, workplace or community.

In 2008, served 192 individuals.

Low Vision Services

Certified low vision specialists provide evaluation and prescribe low vision optical aids and devices to maximize remaining vision.

In 2008, served 541 individuals.

Children's Services

Early intervention, preschool sessions and school age programs provide therapeutic teaching to ensure mainstream education.

In 2008, served 68 individuals.

Employment Services

Vocational evaluation and job training prepares people for work

in their chosen field either in the community or at our industrial facility.

In 2008, served 25 individuals.

Central Industries

Central Industries is our industrial division employing a highly-skilled workforce of men and women who produce millions of dollars in merchandise annually.

In 2008, employed 123 individuals.

Call Center

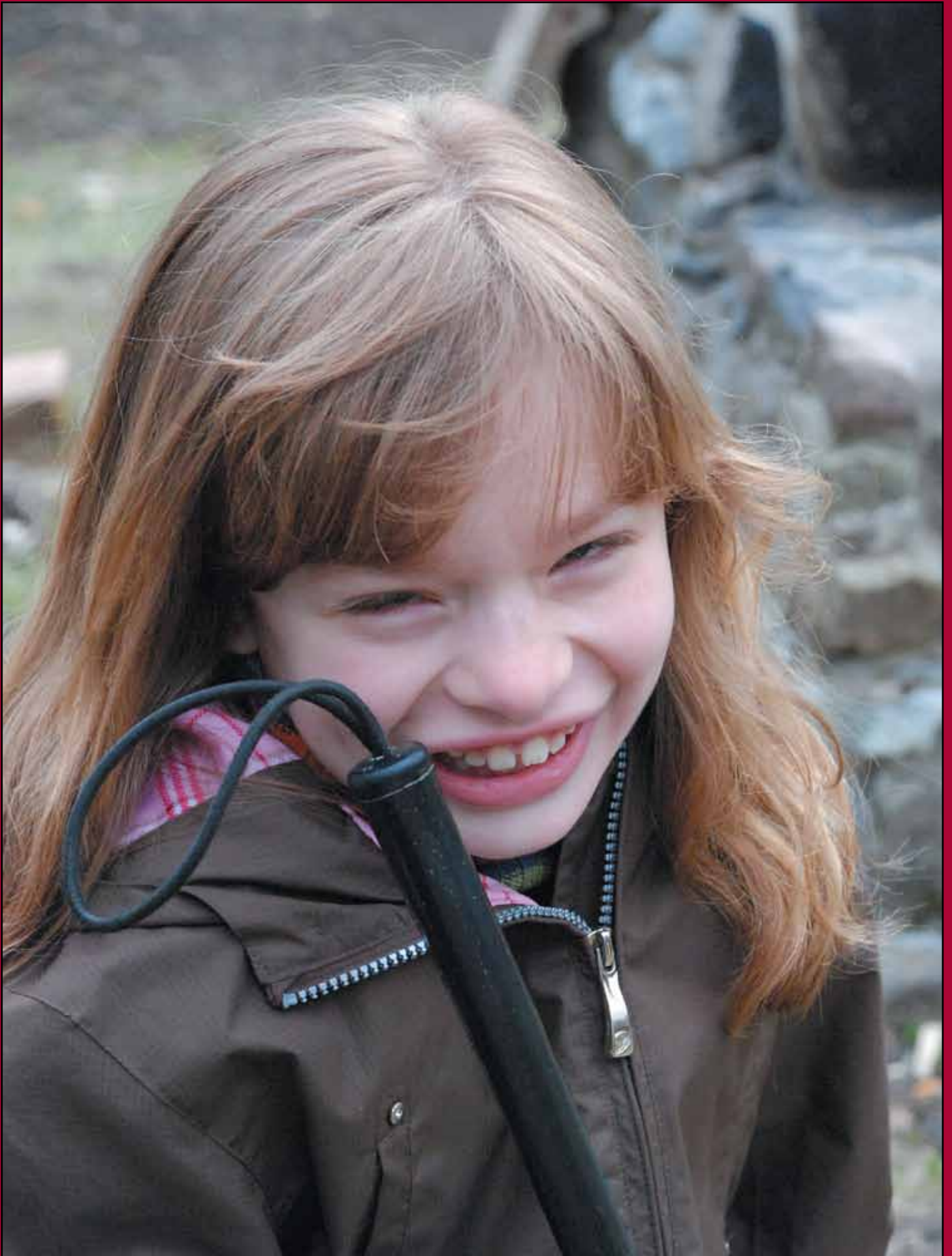
Inspired by the success of our industries program and the growing national trend toward service-related careers and employment opportunities, CABVI built a call center. In addition to providing inbound customer service assistance, our call center also offers outbound calling campaigns.

In 2008, 15 individuals were trained.

Psychosocial Services

Helping consumers navigate the emotional waters associated with vision loss. Classes are offered to the individual and their family to talk about this life-altering event and look at the stages of adjustment that eventually lead to acceptance.

In 2008, served 240 individuals.



MAISIE MERZA



It's a Tuesday evening and 11-year old Maisie Merza is excited with anticipation. The next morning, Melinda Schink, a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) from CABVI, is coming to her home to teach her math. "I like doing math with Miss Melinda," said Maisie. "It's fun!"

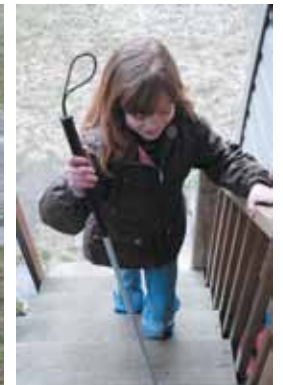
An affectionate girl with a contagious sense of humor, Maisie is a third-grade student in Boonville.

The staff at CABVI has watched Maisie grow up. Maisie was born blind and her mother, Margaret, brought her to the agency when she was 18 months old. "She had speech therapy, orientation and mobility and other services. It was amazing to see her learn how to

navigate around the house and even unfamiliar places by herself."

"Maisie especially likes CABVI's summer programs where kids do everything from fishing to planting flowers to horse-back riding," added Margaret. "They've given her so many skills and positive experiences. The more she learns, the easier it will be for her to make her way in the world, independently."

A hug and a smile from Maisie will melt your heart. "She's won the hearts of many at CABVI," said Margaret. "In turn, the CABVI family has touched our lives in so many wonderful ways. It's a lasting bond, and I'm so grateful to them."





MI SO KWAK



A steady stream of cars zip up and down Black River Boulevard in Rome on a crisp March day. On the adjacent sidewalk, a determined teenage girl takes confident strides while sweeping a white metal cane side to side across her path. Words of encouragement come from behind her. “You’re doing great!”

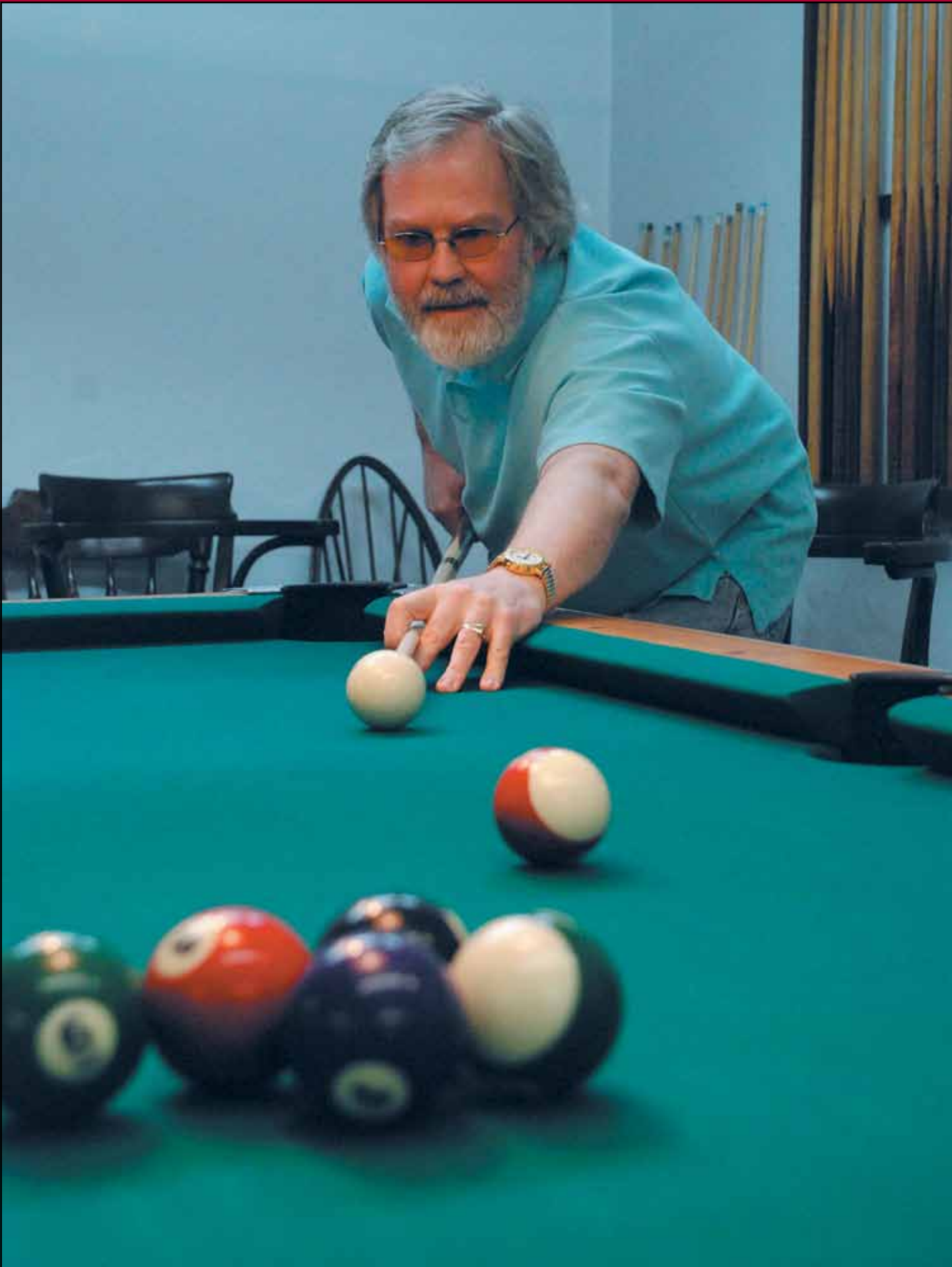
Many people driving by glance over: it’s not something they see everyday. What they’re seeing is 15 year-old Mi So Kwak, blind since birth, and Jim Marscher, Orientation and Mobility Specialist from CABVI.

“He’s a nice man,” says Mi So with a quick smile as she refers to Jim. “My school put me together with Jim after my family and I came here from Korea a year and a half ago. He’s been helping

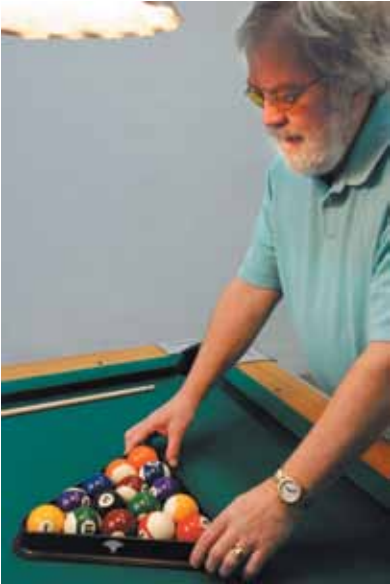
me learn how to get around ever since. I’ll be going to the new high school in the Fall, and Jim will help me get oriented to the new building ahead of time.”

Mi So is truly a remarkable young lady. Not only is she an honors student at Strough Middle School, she also plays the flute and went to the All-County competition. “I memorize what I hear and play it back.” Mi So is also on the swim team and is learning karate.

On that day along the boulevard, Mi So isn’t focused on the new high school, her flute or any other extracurricular activities. She’s learning how to cross the street safely, avoiding large clumps of dirt left from winter plowing, on her way to buy M&Ms at the very busy convenience store on the corner.



GERALD MORROW



For some, early retirement may be a blessing. For Gerald Morrow, retiring at the age of 56 from his job as a bank manager in Lowville was anything but. Following two surgeries for glaucoma, Gerald developed tunnel vision that ultimately forced his retirement. “I could see pretty well with my right eye, but my vision was impaired enough that I would often bump into people and things.

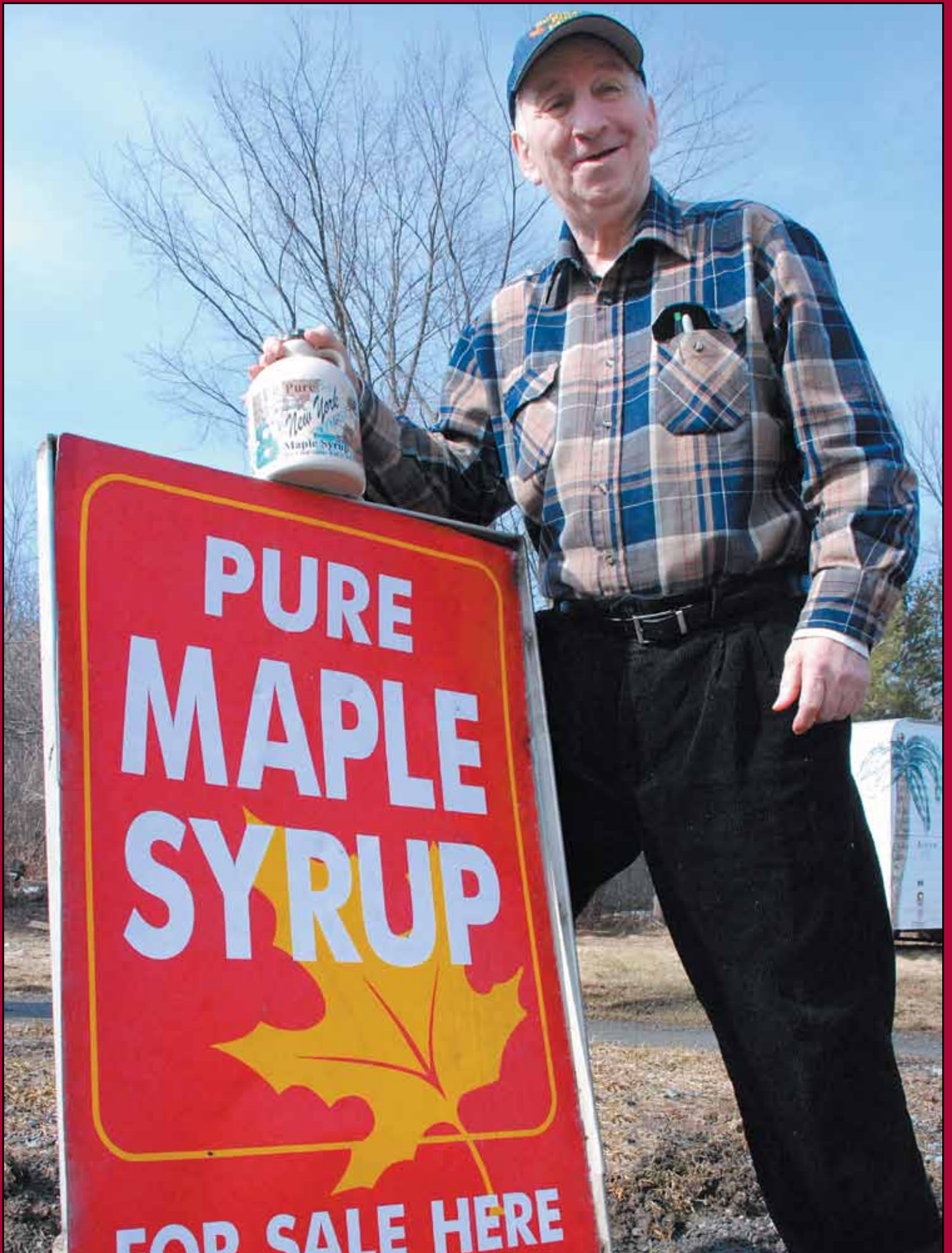
“I felt sorry for myself. I felt useless,” Gerald admitted. “I belong to the local Lion’s Club, and we’re active in issues related to vision. I heard about CABVI’s clinic located at Dr. Woodcock’s office in Watertown. I went there for a low vision examination and that’s where I met Kathy Cima.”

Kathy provides psychosocial services for CABVI. She helps consumers understand and get through the emotional stages associated with vision loss.

“Talking to Kathy was a turning point for me. I finally accepted my vision loss and moved toward getting on with my life.”

And life for Gerald includes playing billiards several times a week at the Lowville Masonic Lodge. He has several trophies to show for tournaments he’s won.

“With CABVI’s help, I’ve learned to make the most of my remaining vision. I can’t thank them enough for being there during some of my toughest times and making me realize that there is life after vision loss.”



HARVEY BURNHAM



Life is sweet for Harvey Burnham. He and his wife, Ruth, and their three sons, have been making maple syrup at their home in Watertown since the 1970s. Diagnosed with diabetes in 2003, Harvey's vision loss was sudden.

"That's when CABVI came into my life," said Harvey. "I've benefited from several services they offer like Orientation and Mobility. They taught me how to get around safely with a cane, even crossing streets downtown. And they gave me so many devices that make my life easier: magnifiers, a talking watch, safety razor,

a phone with big numbers and a pillbox with big letters. But this is the best," he said, leafing through his large print address book. "It's my lifeline. It has all my maple syrup contacts and customers."

With sales of the Burnham's Syrup tripling since November, 2008, it's obvious that Harvey is not letting his visual impairment impair his life or his livelihood.

"I give CABVI a lot of credit for showing me how to do things on my own so I don't have to depend on anyone. That's a good feeling."



MARGARET MOYLAN



Margaret Moylan has a cheerful sweetness about her that you might not expect from someone who has been battling Multiple Sclerosis since 1985 and Parkinson's Disease since 1986. What's more, Margaret also has several visual problems: cataracts, glaucoma, double vision and macular degeneration. In spite of these challenges, her gentle, perseverant spirit shows through.



Margaret and Patrick Moylan

Margaret and her husband of 40 years, Patrick, live in Herkimer and before retiring, were teachers at Ilion High School. The couple is very involved in a local Parkinson's support group, and Margaret speaks about the disease.

Margaret first came to CABVI in the late 1990s. "They gave me a low vision exam and occupational therapy," she said. "My husband and I go to the agency Christmas party and when the Sight Shoppe* has sales, we stop by. They have so many great items that help me around the house. I especially like the big calendars for keeping my appointments. That's where I got my magnifiers and reading lights. What's always struck me about CABVI is how friendly and helpful all the people are. It's just a great atmosphere. I take comfort in knowing they're there."

* The Sight Shoppe offers products that help with writing, record keeping, reading, leisure activities, labeling and marking, household/kitchen items and medical needs. The Sight Shoppe also carries absorptive lenses, talking clocks and watches, sewing products and books and much more.



CENTRAL INDUSTRIES

CABVI's employment and manufacturing division, Central Industries, continued its remarkable growth in 2008.

Product sales to nearly 12,000 customers throughout the United States grew 10 percent to exceed \$25 million. Central Industries employs 123, sixty-one of whom are blind or visually impaired. CABVI added a full range of

environmentally friendly cleaning products, bringing the total number of CABVI product lines to 29.

Many CABVI products are sold under agreement to agencies of the state and federal governments. Examples of these agencies are the New York State Department of Transportation, New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the U.S. Depart-

ment of Defense and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. CABVI is the sole supplier of examination gloves to the federal Transportation Security Administration for security screenings at 460 major airports across the United States.

BASE SUPPLY CENTERS



With great fanfare, CABVI opened the **Island Express Store** at Naval Station Newport, RI, September 24, 2008. The **Island Express** is the fourth base supply center owned and operated by CABVI at military bases in the northeast. Sales from the **Island Express** and CABVI's sister stores - **Shipyards Express**, at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME, and **Galaxy Express** at the Air Reserve Base in Westover, MA, **Dolphin Express**, at the Submarine Base in New London, CT, rose 13 percent to \$3.24 million.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PRE-SCHOOL VISION SCREENING

CABVI has taken a leading role in coordinating community resources to meet the need for large-scale pre-school vision screening.

Our preschool vision screening program relies heavily on our volunteers. CABVI's two-hour training class teaches volunteers to conduct a four-step vision screening that evaluates children for vision problems such as color-blindness, lazy eye, a muscle imbalance causing crossed eyes, and the ability to see clearly.

In 2008, volunteers screened 3,485 children through the pre-school vision screening program, referring 137 for follow-up exams.

MOHAWK VALLEY BRAILLE TRANSCRIBERS

The Mohawk Valley Braille Transcribers (MVBT) were founded in 1973. Twenty-five volunteers, many of whom are retired teachers, work year-round to transcribe school textbooks into braille and convert written materials into large print format and on to audiotape.

In 2008, 23 Braillists produced 106,711 Braille pages for textbooks and other reading material sent to 22 states.

BOILERMAKER WATER STATION



With more than 10,000 runners participating in last year's Boilermaker Road Race, CABVI estimated that there would be more than a

quarter of a million cups used at the water stations and even more cups used to serve beverages at the post-race party. With these facts and figures in mind, we took steps to "green" the Boilermaker by supplying our water station with biodegradable and compostable Earth Cups made from plant starch.

When the race was over, the team cleaned the Memorial Parkway. Instead of using regular plastic trash bags, they used biodegradable bags manufactured by Central Industries. As strong as traditional trash bags, CABVI's bags will break down in landfills.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

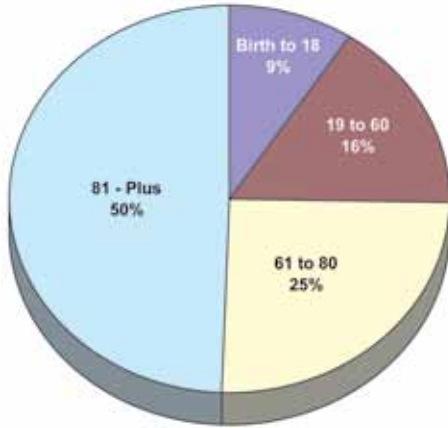
People volunteering together in a spirit of cooperation accomplish great things. The Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired is fortunate to have devoted volunteers who impart valued gifts of time and service and have a positive impact throughout our agency.

In 2008, 383 volunteers provided 20,070 hours of service.

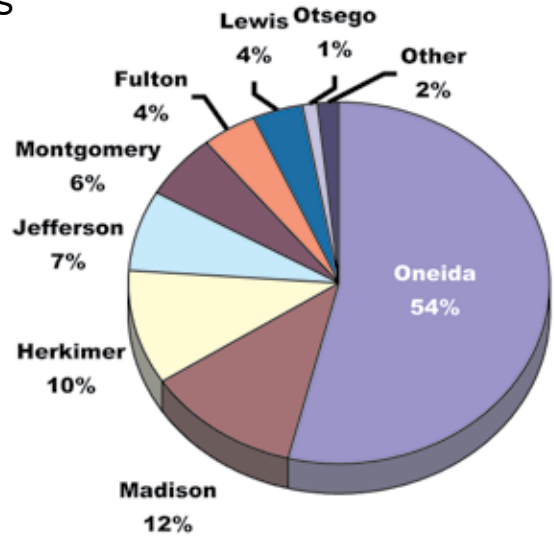


2008 STATISTICS

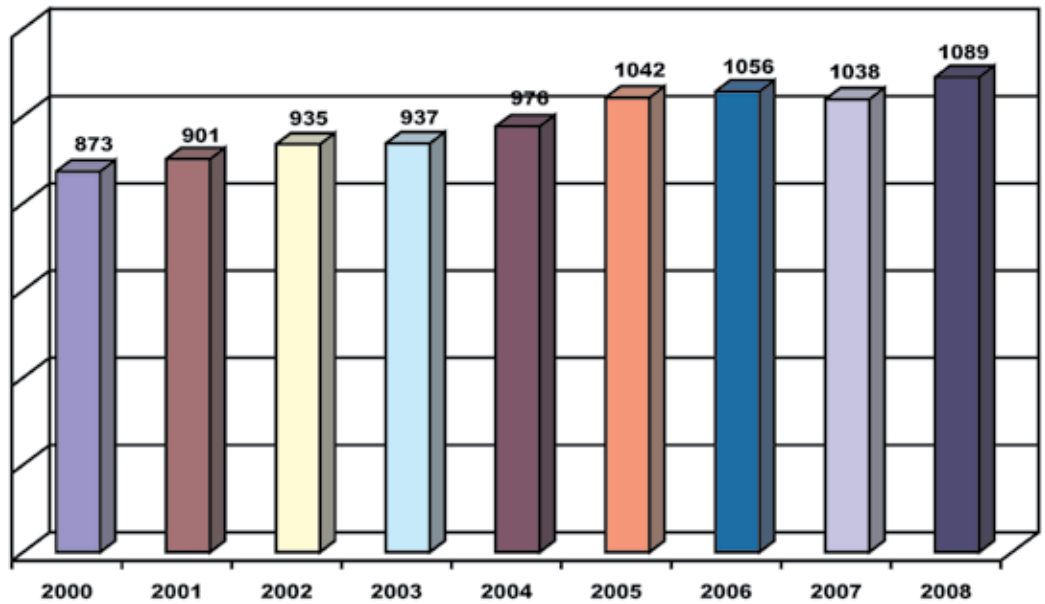
CONSUMERS SERVED BY AGE



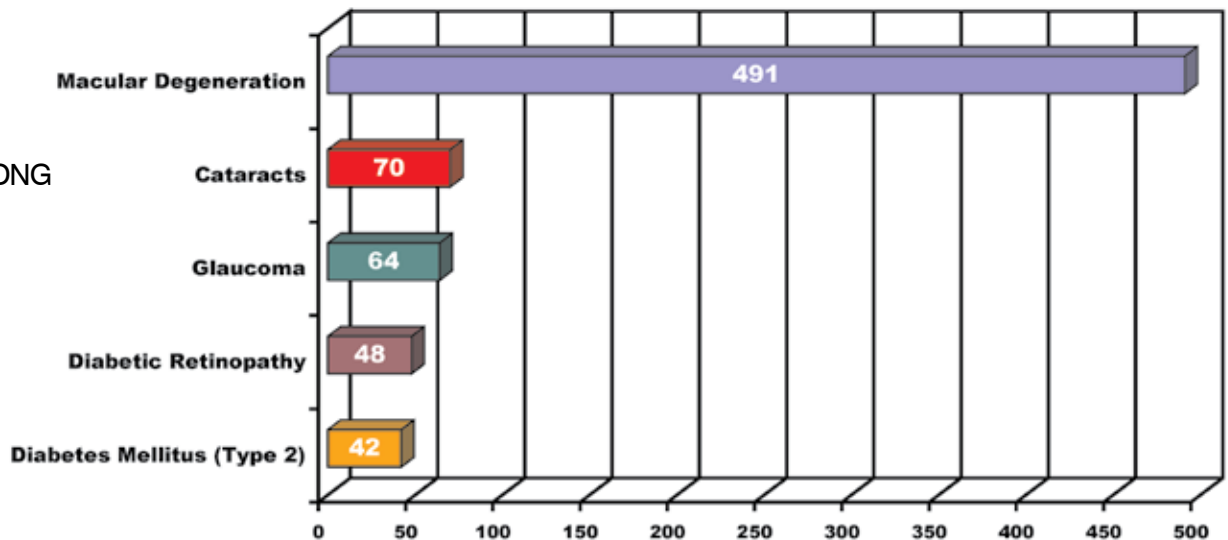
CONSUMERS SERVED BY COUNTY



YEAR-TO-YEAR GROWTH OF CONSUMERS SERVED SINCE 2000



MOST COMMON CAUSES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AMONG 2008 CABVI CONSUMERS



FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS

A generous community helps to make our mission possible. Your contribution to CABVI directly assists people needing our services, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

Members of the Anne Sullivan Macy Society support the mission of the agency with significant gifts in the categories on the next pages. **Society members are listed in bold.**

Because of space constraints, donors who have made gifts of \$50 or more in 2008 are listed here, but CABVI thanks everyone who has contributed to our services.

We make every effort to properly recognize our benefactors. Please call us at (315)797-2233 if we have made an error or omission. Thank you.

\$2500 Plus

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