

CABViews & News

Central Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Rehabilitation Department

Summer 2008



Let's Say Hello To... Dominic & Angeline Papa

It is 1940, Gloversville, the Mount Carmel Church is auditioning students for an upcoming play, "Here Comes Charlie". Gloversville native, Angeline Castiglione, has been selected to play the lead role of Charlie. Dominic Papa wasn't one for stage shows. He had seen Angeline at school and she seemed like a nice girl, if only he could meet her. Dominic contacted the play's director inquiring about acting parts. The director said, "Dominic, that's great you want to participate. I could use a few men. I am curious, you never expressed an interest in acting before, why now?" Dominic responded, "I want to meet Angeline Castiglione."

The director laughed and replied, "Her father will kill you!" That did not stop Dominic. He joined the entourage and was introduced to Angeline. "When I first met her I told her, I'm going to marry you. Angeline laughed. She said, I was crazy! I'm not sure she believed me." A year later in 1941, they married.

April 20 was their 67th wedding anniversary and like all marriages, there were good times and struggles. When they were first married, Angeline worked in the glove factory owned by Dominic's family called Mario Papa & Sons.

Dominic states, "Angeline made \$25.00 a week, which was higher than my salary. When we first started out, we lived above my parents",

explained Angie. After a few years, we began having children. We had two girls, twenty-two months apart. Luckily, my parents were able to watch the girls for a few hours after school. We were very fortunate. To our surprise, eleven years after the birth of our second daughter, a son was born. We have three grown children, who are all successful, seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.”

For over sixty years, Mario, Dominic and his three brothers ran a successful business in Gloversville. “When we first started out, profits were in the range of \$100,000 a year. When we sold the business, we had reached thirteen million yearly. We had some good years!” exclaims Dominic. However, with all success comes challenges. Dominic was born with poor vision. He was considered high myopic, which was progressive. By the age of twenty-one, he was wearing both contact lenses and glasses.

In 1950, while playing baseball, Dominic was injured and lost the vision in his right eye. The loss of vision was traumatic, yet for Dominic, the overall impact was minimized. “I had very good doctors who worked to ensure that the vision in my left eye remained constant. I was still able to drive and remain active in the community. I think that because of my vision loss, I was more sensitive to the needs of others who are visually impaired. I became a member of the Lions Club, eventually rising to the position of District Governor. During this tenure, I was able to serve as Chairman of the Sight Committee, which was instrumental in establishing the Lions Eye Bank in Albany. I registered 150 eye donors within a two week period.”

Unfortunately, in March 2001, while Dominic was wintering in Florida, he fell on a pile of coral rocks and destroyed his remaining eye. Despite several attempts with surgery to restore vision, all vision was lost. “I was devastated,”

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Community Clinic Expansion

March 31, 2008 was the start of CABVI's newest community rehabilitation clinic in Fort Plain. Local Optometrist, Shauna Glenn Zemken, OD opened her practice to the CABVI, in an effort to outreach local residents. On a quarterly basis, CABVI will be offering services to clients at Dr. Zemken's office. Dr. Janovsky, CABVI's Certified Low Vision Optometrist, will be conducting low vision exams. Other provided services include Vision Rehabilitation, Occupational Therapy and Orientation & Mobility. Dr. Zemken states, "We are dedicated to comprehensive vision rehabilitation and providing those services to people where they live."

This expansion becomes the third community rehabilitation clinic. The James T. Turnbull Low Vision Clinic located at CABVI, 507 Kent Street, Utica, is home base for all clinic services, with all rehabilitation services originating from Kent Street. Two additional doctors have also opened their practices to the agency, Dr. Michael Spellicy in Hamilton and Dr. Leslie Woodcock in Watertown. "The advanced age of many of CABVI's patients makes traveling to Utica difficult, if not impossible", explains Kathy Beaver, Manager of Vision Services. "Additionally, some of these same patients are not only dealing with vision loss, but health impairments. If we can provide services closer to their home, successful rehabilitation is more likely".

For more information regarding CABVI's clinic services in your community, call **Robin Tripple, Low Vision Assistant at ext. 1239.**



Optometrist Advice “Let’s Talk Tints”

Most patients with vision loss have difficulty with environmental lighting. Patients may express problems due to sun glare, fluorescent lights, light coming in a window or may have a severe glare response to most lighting.

As varied as the response to lighting, is the degree of tint and the hue each person prefers. Light glare affects each person differently, as they suffer singularly or in combinations of cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, macular degeneration or congenital conditions. Patients with the goal of improving environmental lighting may need to try more

than one tint or intensity of color. Gray, amber, green, red, orange and yellow tints can be beneficial, depending on the environmental concern.

Indoor and outdoor environments require different tint levels. Patients using the correct tint can improve their mobility as they increase contrast for curbs, steps and changes in elevation. To maximize your vision and/or improve mobility, explore a variety of tints and find the proper tint for you.

Dr. Allen Zuck
Certified Low Vision Specialist

**“We help people who
don’t
see well live like those
who do.”**

What is Low Vision?

Low Vision is defined as a level of visual acuity, 20/70 or less, which cannot be corrected with glasses. Individuals with low vision have some useful sight. However, their limited vision interferes with activities of daily living.

Individuals who are legally blind have best corrected visual acuity of less than 20/200 or have limited side vision of 20 degrees or less. Individuals who are legally blind may also have useful vision just like someone with low vision.

To determine how much useful vision you have, a low vision exam is helpful. This exam differs from a typical eye exam in that low vision specialists perform functional vision assessments. The low vision exam is typically longer in length than regular eye exams. In addition to determining useful sight, they evaluate appropriate aides, provide training in the use of devices, consider secondary disabilities which may impact

device usage and simulate how the device can be used to complete activities of daily living.

At CABVI, we apply a multi-disciplinary approach to treatment of low vision. Dr. Alan Zuck and Dr. John Janovsky, Optometrists certified in Low Vision, lead the treatment team. Vision Rehabilitation Therapists in partnership with Occupational Therapists assist patients in identifying areas of need and work with the patient through the exam process to achieve successful outcomes. Consumers who come to the exam with pre-identified areas of need, particularly with examples of reading material they are interested in accessing, tend to be more successful in the exam process.

If you are interested in a low vision exam or if your vision has changed since your last visit to the clinic, give **Robin Tripple, Low Vision Assistant a call to schedule your appointment, 797-2233 ext. 1239.**

Children's Corner

The Children's Department has a variety of sponsored programs, one of which is a recreation program called "Seasonings". Up to eight different events are scheduled throughout the year, during holidays and school vacations.

On April 14, ten school-aged visually impaired children gathered at the Children's Center for a morning of fun in the sun with swaying palm trees, sand, seashells, a fishing pond, and tunes from the Beach Boys. This was followed by an afternoon swim at the Sitrin Healthcare pool.

Each child decorated a baseball cap and a pair of sunglasses with their choice of materials, followed by digging for hidden treasures in the sand table. All participants tried their luck in the fishing pond in a casting competition. Prior to the picnic lunch that was served in sand pails with shovels and accompanied

by ocean sound recordings, everyone worked out at the beach volleyball courts. After lunch, the gang travelled to Sitrin to relax in the warm tropical waters of the pool, before collecting their decorated treat bags and reluctantly heading home.

Currently, plans are underway for a summer mini camp to be held in August. The itinerary will include joint activities with the older prevocational students. Watch for more details.

Linda McMurray
Children's Services Manager

For additional information, check out a new website which is specifically designed to provide information, support and resources to parents of visually impaired children. The website is sponsored by NAPVI and AFB which is www.familyconnect.org. Also, take reference to CABVI's webpage under the services' section.

“Let’s Say Hello” cont.

explains Dominic. “I was very depressed, and for a short period of time, considered suicide. Through soul searching and great support of family and friends, I came to realize that I had one reason to die, and many more reasons to live.”

“One day after my fifth surgery, my doctor said to me, Dominic you are a smart man and have a lot to offer. Call the Central Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired in Utica. I’m sure they can help you. And that’s what I did.” At the age of 84, through instruction provided by Wendy Hill, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, Dominic learned Braille enabling him to continue his weekly bridge games. Vision Rehabilitation Therapy helped to increase independence in meal preparation, financial management, organization and overall communications. Dominic participated in orientation and mobility in an effort to develop confidence and skills in areas of independent travel. Dominic states, “I began to see that I had been

given a role to play and that role was to inspire others.”

The Papa’s strength and love was tested two years ago, when Angeline began to experience vision loss. She was diagnosed with age related macular degeneration. Angie also received services from the association, participating in vision rehabilitation therapy, orientation and mobility and low vision services.

“It’s hard”, explains Angeline. “I started to complain to Dominic about my vision loss. Then I realized, he knows better than anyone.” Dominic interjects, Angie said to me, “Can you get the pink pot off the porch?” I said, “Sure”. I knew we only had two pots, so I had a fifty-fifty chance of picking the correct one, and I made the right choice.” We think Dominic and Angeline made the right choice too!

Let’s say hello....will be a regular feature in CABViews & News. We hope these stories will help you in adjusting to vision loss.



Descriptive Tour of the Stanley Theater

On Tuesday, June 10, individuals with visual impairments had an opportunity to participate in a descriptive tour of the Stanley Theater. The Stanley Theater has just completed a two-year restoration project with total costs reported between \$11 and \$12 million. Construction began in July 2006, with the theater reopening in April of this year. Renovations included an expanded stage, larger dressing rooms, a new chandelier, an updated marquee, a catering kitchen and a wardrobe room. “The Stanley Theater is an asset to our community”, states Betsy Harvey-Minutti, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. “Throughout the past year, theater

changes and the construction progress have been well publicized. We arranged this tour to allow individuals with visual impairments the opportunity to hear about these changes in greater detail and to stand on this new world stage that has been created.”

This tour is the first of several recreational events that the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Department hopes to offer consumers in the coming year. Ms. Harvey-Minutti states, “The Central New York Region has a wide variety of cultural and recreational programs. We would like to provide individuals with visual impairments an opportunity to actively participate. Throughout the coming year, we are planning to host events throughout our eight-county region that consumers can take advantage of”.

If you are aware of a program or event in your region, please call **Betsy Harvey-Minutti at ext. 1224.**

A Short Introduction to the Long Cane

Many blind or visually impaired people choose to improve the safety of their mobility by using long canes. The traditional white long cane protects the traveller by four basic tasks:

One, identification of the user's blind or visually impaired status. Two, enhancement of the visibility of the traveler. Three, investigation and preview of the area within reach of the cane. Four, detection of unseen objects and potential hazards.

The long cane can be rigid, folding or telescoping. The rigid cane is generally more durable, lighter, better at transmitting vibrations and sounds and less expensive than folding or telescoping canes. The folding and telescoping canes, however, offer convenience of storage when not in use. Long canes can be made of aluminum, fiberglass, carbon fiber or

graphite and weighs from 4 ozs. to 10 ozs., but this weight can change depending on the length of the cane and on the type of cane tip that is used. Cane length is determined by the traveler's height, stride length, speed of travel, awareness of environmental features and reaction time.

Long canes were once referred to as "prescription canes", emphasizing the fact that each cane was designed and issued for a specific individual, on consideration of that person's abilities and travel needs. Blind or visually impaired persons who wish to improve their independent travel, can work with CABVI's Orientation and Mobility instructors to determine the cane or other mobility devices that will address their mobility needs.

Jim Marscher & Mitch Hansen
O & M Therapists



New York State Access Pass

The NYS Access Pass permits a resident of New York State with a permanent disability **free** use of parks, historic sites and recreational facilities operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

The pass does not cover seasonal marine dockage, fees for a group camp, picnic shelter reservations, cabin reservations, performing arts programs or consumables. Applicants must be residents of New York State and provide proof of disability, in the form of certification of legal blindness or the signature of a doctor. The application takes 8 to 10 weeks to process. To request an application, CABVI consumers can either contact the NYS office of Parks and Recreation at
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518-474-2324 or the CABVI Case Management Staff would be happy to provide assistance.

CABVI

315-797-2233

Rehabilitation Staff:

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Betsy Harvey-Minutti	ext. 1224
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Linda McMurray	ext. 1227
Cristina Scalise	ext. 1275
Kim Scerbo	ext. 1303
Robin Tripple	ext. 1239
Tammy Wike	ext. 1280



Outreach Services Coordinator

CABVI is happy to announce the appointment of Jennie Rose Barlow as Outreach Coordinator. Jennie is not new to rehabilitation services, and has always had a close relationship to CABVI. In December 2007, Jennie retired from her position as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. CABVI has long recognized the strong correlation between public education and referrals for service. She will be helping to increase CABVI's presence at community events; speaking to clubs, groups and organizations about the benefits of becoming a part of CABVI's family. For more information: contact **Jennie at ext. 1281.**

How to Support CABVI?

State and federal funding does not cover the total cost of providing services to visually impaired consumers. If you are grateful for the rehabilitation services you received and would like to support the agency's on-going initiatives, you may, send your tax deductible contributions to:

CABVI
507 Kent Street
Utica, NY 13501

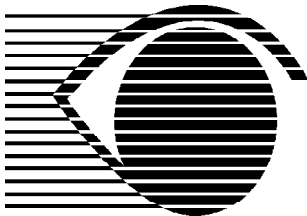
Have a suggestion for a future newsletter article? Do you want to comment on one of the current articles? Give the newsletter editors a call.



Newsletter Editors:
Paula Flisnik & Kathy Beaver
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**FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND
OR HANDICAPPED**

**Central Association for the
Blind and Visually Impaired
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To add your name to the agency's mailing list, call 315-797-2233.
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