



Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

live your vision

UTICA | SYRACUSE



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

OUR MISSION is to assist people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve their highest levels of **INDEPENDENCE**

Established in 1929, the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) is a not-for-profit agency that serves people who are blind or visually impaired, from newborns to the elderly, generally free of charge.

We offer comprehensive vision rehabilitation, employment and technology services individually tailored to meet the needs of people with visual impairments.

CABVI ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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A Message from the **CABVI BOARD CHAIR** and our **PRESIDENT & CEO**



Edward Welsh | Board Chair



Rudy D'Amico | President/CEO

Welcome to the 2015 Annual Report of the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. By every measure it concluded as our best year ever.

Here's why.

We added more jobs for people who are blind or visually impaired bringing our total employment to 252 by year's end.

We expanded employment and manufacturing into the greater Syracuse, N.Y. area, added 20,000 sq. ft. to our distribution center on Dwyer Avenue in Utica and served over 1,500 individuals who are blind or visually impaired in our eight-county Central New York service area.

CABVI hosted the world's first known Camp Abilities winter camp for children living with vision loss. Another first – teams of CABVI cyclists, one as young as eight, rode tandem bikes in the annual Ride for Missing and Exploited Children-Central New York.

The point is this – CABVI is able to thrive because of important and dedicated people like you.

Our boards of directors.

Our donors.

Our sponsors.

Our volunteers.

Our friends.

Our dedicated and hardworking employees.

Our CABVI family.

CABVI continues to remain a successful social enterprise and rises to the challenge of supporting individuals who are blind or visually impaired year after year.

Throughout this report we will share with you some highlights of 2015 and why we feel it was our best year yet.

Thank you for your continued support of our organization and our CABVI family members.

SYRACUSE INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND



Pictured above left to right: Dennis Webster, CABVI Senior Vice President of Production and Operations; Julie Cerio, Director, Onondaga Department of Economic Development; Mark Nicotra, Town of Salina Supervisor; Rudy D'Amico, CABVI President & CEO; Ed Welsh, CABVI Board Chair; Joe Merlan, Production Supervisor, CABVI Syracuse Industries; Brian Daniels, Associate Commissioner, NYS Commission for the Blind; Carrie Laney, Executive Director, New York State Preferred Source Program; Debra Chaiken, President, Aurora of Central New York; Ron Tascarella, Chairman, Empire State Employment Resources for the Blind.

CABVI Syracuse Industries

The operation, known as CABVI Syracuse Industries, opened February 2, 2015 with eight full-time employees, six of whom are legally blind. The operation is 15 employees strong and growing. Twelve of the 15 are legally blind.

CABVI Syracuse Industries is fulfilling orders for examination gloves for the New York City Health + Hospitals, a consortium of hospitals, clinics and nursing homes operated by the City of New York.

Rudy D'Amico, President and CEO of CABVI, said the organization fulfills contracts

for several departments of the Federal Government and New York State. "The government purchases millions of dollars' worth of product from CABVI annually. These are competitive contracts. CABVI pays prevailing wages with competitive benefits. We are committed to creating meaningful jobs for people who are blind."

According to Dennis Webster, Senior Vice President of Production and Operations, CABVI looked to the Syracuse area for this expansion because it did not provide an industries program for people who are blind. "Partnering with Aurora of Central New York, which provides outstanding vision rehabilitation services, CABVI has created

grand opening



an innovative employment and service initiative,” explained Webster.

CABVI is an affiliate of National Industries for the Blind (NIB). For more than 75 years, NIB’s mission has focused on enhancing the opportunities for economic and personal independence of people who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment.

Jobs are great. Careers are better. CABVI strives to help people who are blind develop long-term vocational goals. CABVI’s Best Practice Program helps employees improve workplace performance, develop new workplace skills and, with application of these skills, prepare themselves for possible workplace advancement or competitive job placement. “We are committed to assisting employees in enhancing, advancing and

moving within their chosen career path,” Webster added.

That is the story of Joseph Merlan, the manager of CABVI Syracuse Industries. A 10-year employee of CABVI, Merlan knows the struggle people who are blind have finding and keeping a job. “Like most of my employees, I am blind too. I know what it’s like in the job market. The options for career growth diminish with your vision. That’s why efforts like CABVI’s, to create employment opportunities for people who are blind, are so important and worthy.

I started on the glove line but worked my way to supervisor of our office supply line then customer service representative in our Contact Center.

The best part is... we’re just getting started.”

DWYER DISTRIBUTION CENTER EXPANSION



Dwyer Distribution Center Expansion

Over the course of the past decade CABVI created 128 new jobs – most for people who are legally blind.

Some workers' journeys became the stuff of legend. Born blind, the older woman moved from Oregon to Utica to earn the first paycheck of her life. The younger woman said goodbye to her family and ventured from New Orleans to become a Customer Service Representative in CABVI's contact center. The middle-aged man from Philadelphia heard of a wonderful opportunity for work in Utica, N.Y. and made a move for which he was unsure but admits, "It's worked out very well."

Many come from around Central New York and enjoy the dignity of a wage well-earned. Growth that explosive would be the envy of a multi-national conglomerate. To CABVI it begged the question: How do we comfortably accommodate this prosperity?

The answer came in two parts.

First – the agency opened CABVI Syracuse Industries employing 15 individuals in Onondaga County, N.Y. The facility, in the Syracuse suburb of Liverpool, allowed the agency to move inventory of product to the source, freeing cramped space in Utica.

Next, with the assistance of an innovative funding package from The Lavelle Fund for the Blind, CABVI expanded its Dwyer Avenue distribution center by 20,000 square feet – about half the size of a football field.

from the ground up



Construction commenced in May and concluded in October 2015. The Dwyer development represented CABVI's greatest single project since acquiring the building in 2005.

The impact of the \$1.3 million expansion rippled across many sectors of the local economy. It created dozens of construction jobs for concrete and steel workers, for plumbers and electrical contractors. They forged six loading docks where once existed only two and products, millions of dollars in products needed every day by New York State and the Federal Government, moved through these new gateways and onto the nation's highways.

The stage is set for continued success. The larger distribution center enables CABVI to retain current employment levels.

Combined with stunning technological breakthroughs, of which CABVI is taking full advantage, opportunities for people who are blind to live their vision will continue to swell. Employees who are legally blind will soon navigate the corridors of the Dwyer distribution center picking products and fulfilling orders using scanning applications.

It is a task that, until a few years ago, seemed impossible.

But making the unlikely a reality is at CABVI's core.

CABVI ADAPTIVE SPORTS AND RECREATION



The Ride for Missing Children

The CABVI Cycling Team raised more than \$1,400 in support of the 2015 Ride for Missing Children (RFMC).

Staff, consumers, family and friends of CABVI came together to raise money for The Ride. They sold custom water bottles, bike tags and accepted general donations to help support this important cause. A portion of the proceeds raised supported Camp Abilities-CABVI that provides an adaptive sport and recreation experience for youth who are blind and visually impaired.

“For us, being a part of The Ride is twofold,” explained Kathy Beaver, CABVI’s Vice President of Rehabilitation Services. “It provides the education our youth need when it comes to safety and abduction

awareness, and shows them what it means to volunteer and give back to an important cause.”

CABVI had a total of 22 riders participate in the ride. Each youth rider rode tandem with a sighted pilot. The group also included one shepherd and one support staff.

“Early morning training rides and cool temperatures made preparing for the race challenging,” explained Kathy. “However, our group was determined and committed. We trained alongside reps from the RFMC Leadership Team and other equally committed riders, and we could not be more proud of our riders, volunteers, and staff.”

we can move mountains



Winter Camp Abilities-CABVI

In 2015, CABVI added a winter camp – the first known winter camp of its kind in the world. “There are over 30 Camp Abilities that run globally each year,” explained Kathy Beaver. “Our winter camp builds on the summer camp idea and brings a whole new dimension to adaptive sports and recreation and vision rehabilitation therapy.”

Winter Camp Abilities-CABVI took place at Camp Huntington in Raquette Lake, NY.

Twenty campers, each paired with an individual counselor, participated in winter activities including snowmobiling, snowshoeing, broomball, United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) biathlon, ice fishing, cross country and downhill skiing.

The use of adaptive technology was also thrown in the mix as campers used adaptive talking GPS devices to navigate across the frozen lake and find their way to their Adirondack accommodations. “I love how encouraging the counselors and my teammates were and how we got to try new things,” said Quinton, a Camp Abilities-CABVI returning camper.

A unique aspect of Camp is the incorporation of vision rehab and life skills training into the rotation of adaptive sports activities. This allows campers to experience a well-rounded sense of health, wellness and independence. To further this concept, campers were also responsible for kitchen duty in the dining hall. They would set tables, sweep, wash dishes, and make sure the facility was ready for the next meal. “The idea is to teach independent living skills that will stay with them for a lifetime,” Kathy added.

THE NUMBERS a complete look at 2015

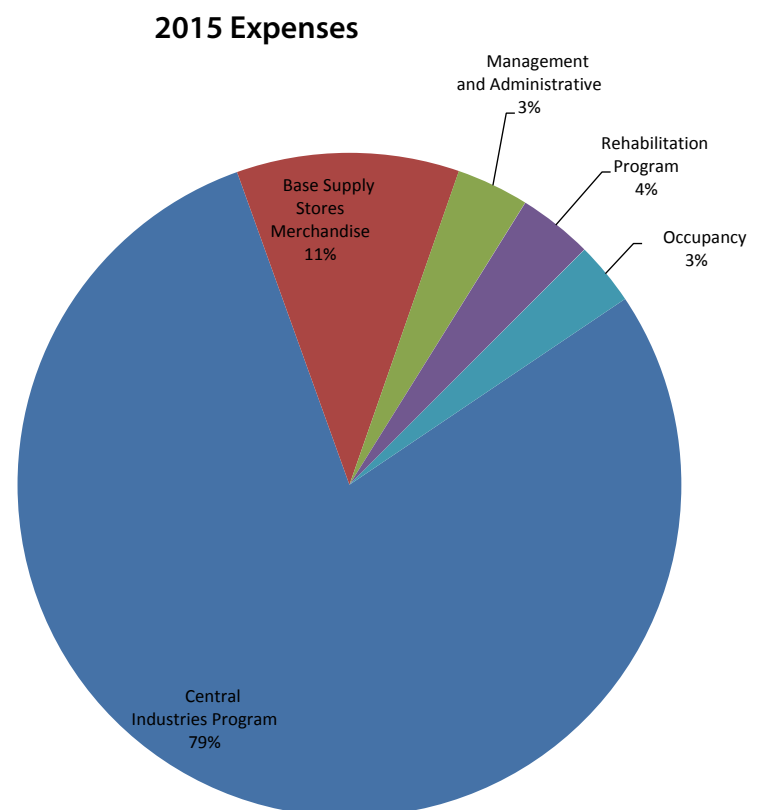
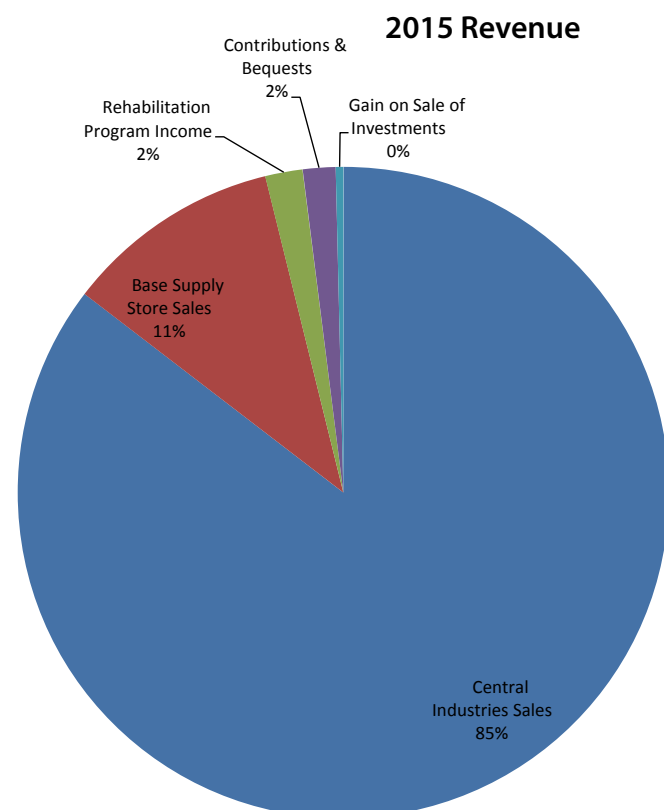
REVENUE

	2015	2014
Central Industries Sales	\$41,474,615	\$38,731,632
Base Supply Center Sales	5,215,026	4,845,183
Rehabilitation Program Income	897,049	987,574
Contributions & Bequests	790,411	630,636
Gain on Sale of Investments	181,819	558,790
Total Operating Revenue	\$48,558,920	\$45,753,815

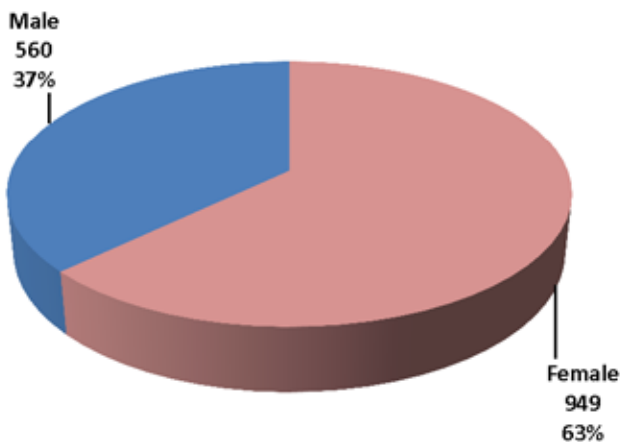
OPERATING EXPENSES

Central Industries Program	\$35,909,059	\$33,451,252
Base Supply Center Merchandise	4,928,874	4,500,572
Management and Administrative	1,379,831	1,500,725
Rehabilitation Program	1,445,935	1,377,114
Occupancy	1,391,183	876,117
Development	226,916	178,734
Public Education / Communications	200,800	130,158
Total Operating Expenses	\$45,482,598	\$42,014,672

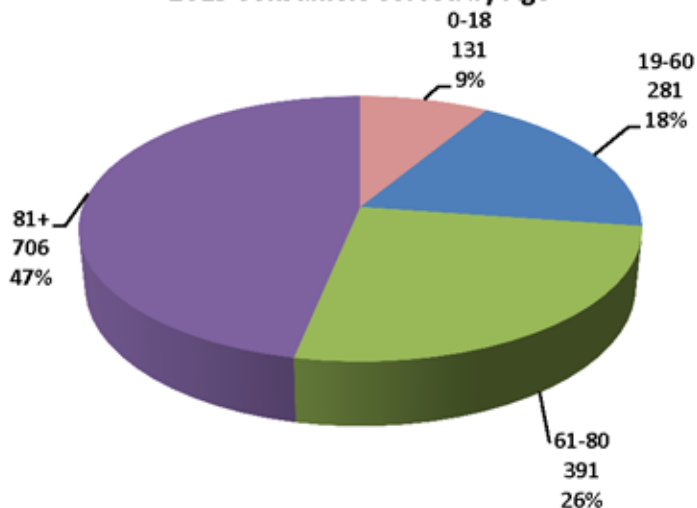
Ending Net Assets **\$35,574,273** **\$32,959,097**



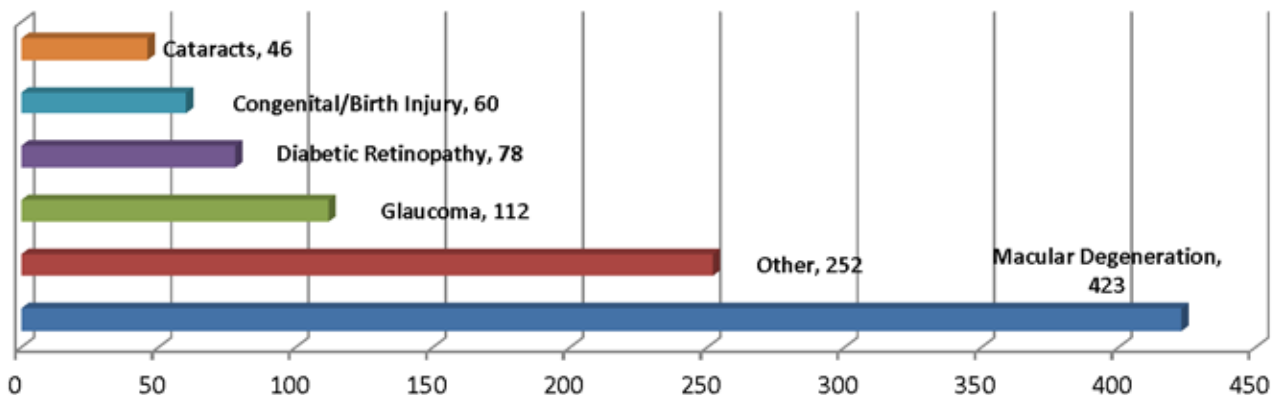
2015 Consumers Served by Gender



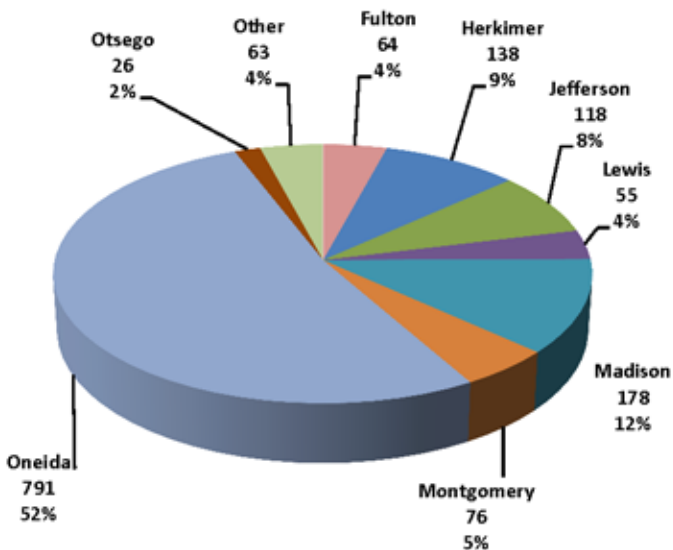
2015 Consumers Served by Age



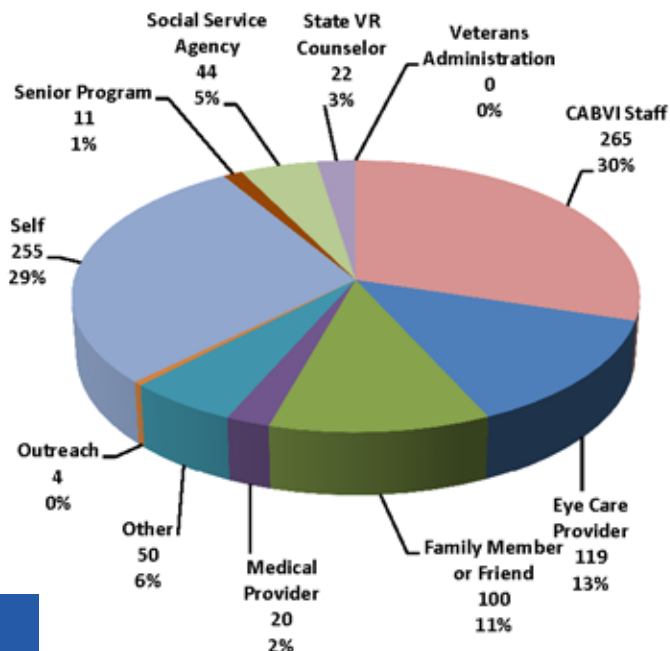
2015 Most Common Causes of Visual Impairment Among Consumer Intakes



2015 Consumers Served by County



2015 Consumer Intakes - Referred By:



2015 Volunteer Stats – 538 volunteers with 17,586 hours
 2015 Preschool Vision Screening Stats – 2954 children screened with 118 referrals

A BIG THANK YOU friends and benefactors 2015

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

Members of the Anne Sullivan Macy Society support the mission of the agency with gifts of \$100 or greater in the categories on these pages.

While we appreciate all gifts of any denomination, because of space constraints, we are listing only contributions of \$50 and above.

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.

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2015 Appeals

Generous donations to CABVI's semi-annual appeals helped fund some of the agency's most dynamic vision rehab efforts.

In the spring, Joseph Merlan shared his odyssey from unemployment to management of CABVI Syracuse Industries over the past decade. His sight deteriorating regularly, Joe took advantage of the opportunities CABVI's services provided to live his vision. He pursued his education earning an associate degree, bachelor's degree and finally, an MBA.



Joe Merlan

With your assistance, the trajectory of Joe's career points up while he creates a better life for his growing family.

Joe's is a great story but it is not unique at CABVI. Through the years, CABVI's programs have helped thousands of people with vision loss remain independent.

One of those persons was Mabel Clark, Matron of the St. Luke's Home in Utica until her retirement in the early 1970s.

As her vision worsened her, grandson Harold T. "Tom" Clark, brought her to CABVI for vision rehabilitation services. He remembered how she managed to continue her duties at the home because of CABVI.



Harold T. "Tom" Clark

Over time Tom has grown from dotting grandson to pillar of the community. In 2011, he contacted CABVI and offered to give back to the organization. He volunteered to chair CABVI's annual Holiday Appeal. The community responded so overwhelmingly to Tom's message that he asked to chair the appeal again. Then again. And again.

2015 marked the fifth anniversary of Tom Clark's role as Honorary Chairperson. Over that period the campaign raised a half million dollars for vision rehabilitation, outreach, adaptive sports and recreation and Camp Abilities-CABVI.

Fortunately, prospective donors need not wait for an appeal to arrive in their mailboxes. Please show your support for people who are blind in Central New York by making a gift to CABVI at www.cabvi.org.

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