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Growth is essential for any company or organization. It ensures that food is on the table for families, a roof is over their head, and they can live a life of comfort.

Each year, we strive to solidify the longevity of our agency. We develop new initiatives, win government contracts, and expand employment opportunities for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, as well as for sighted individuals.

Since our inception in 1929, we have never experienced success quite like we did in 2017. As federal and state contracts continued, our rehabilitation services expanded to new heights and our employment program created more upward mobility positions than ever before. We served over 1,600 consumers and logged nearly 22,000 volunteer hours.

As you read this report, you will find inspiring stories about individuals overcoming obstacles, finding new passions, and how vision loss does not stop people from achieving greatness.

Thank you for your continued support of our organization and for assisting us with another remarkable year.

Sincerely,

Edward Welsh
Board Chair

Rudy D’Amico
President & CEO
As a husband, and father of three, Nasser puts food on the table and takes care of his family’s needs. For several years, he held true to his word, but he and his family were thousands of miles apart.

Nasser arrived in the United States eight years ago to seek refuge from his home country, Eritrea. He had no choice but to leave his wife and children behind while he developed a strategy to bring them into the country. If he did not leave his country, Nasser knew he would get arrested and sent to jail.

“At the age of eight, I was struck with measles,” said Nasser. “It took one year to cure the disease, but by that point, I was totally blind. However, as I grew older, it did not stop me from pursuing a higher education. I went to college and received my master’s in education from a college in South Africa.”

After his master’s, Nasser returned to Eritrea so he could be with his family, and to find a job. Right away, he found a job at a local high school as a teacher and accepted an offer as a board member for the National Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. At this point, Nasser’s life was moving in the right direction.

One day, after fighting for the rights of the blind citizens of his country, he was informed that he would be put in jail if he continued.

“My country does not allow blind citizens to have a job if they do not have an associate’s or bachelor’s degree,” said Nasser. “So, I fought for the rule to change and asked the United States Embassy for help. Once I did that, my country thought I was a spy for America and wanted to put me in jail forever.”

In 2007, Nasser left his family behind and crossed the border into Ethiopia for refuge. For three years, he worked as a private tutor so he could send money to his family. Once his time was through there, his close friend helped him make the long journey to America.

Upon arrival, Nasser was nervous. He found it hard to cope with a new environment, a new situation, and the thought of his family living on another continent without him. Soon after finding an apartment, he found a job with Catholic Charities in Syracuse as a translator. “I was thankful for the job because it helped me bring my family to America,” said Nasser. Once his family arrived, Nasser needed a steady income. His job was on a contract basis, so it was not always guaranteed money for him.

Catholic Charities connected him to the Commission for the Blind, which proved to be more valuable than a steady job at the time. They trained him on how to use a computer, improved his orientation and mobility skills, and worked with him to be fluent in English. During his training, a man named Glen connected him to Kathy Beaver, the Vice President of Rehabilitation at CABVI.

“Once my contract ended with Catholic Charities in 2014, I applied for a production position at CABVI,” said Nasser. “I was very eager to work so I could support my family, and when I was hired in the beginning of 2015, I was so happy.”

After he was hired, Nasser asked Dennis Webster, Senior Vice President of Production and Operations at CABVI, if there was a job for his wife, who is also blind. Dennis encouraged Nasser’s wife to apply since they needed several production workers at the Syracuse location. At the end of 2015, his wife was hired and they now had two sources of income to support their family.

“I appreciate everything the agency has done for me and for my family. It is truly a blessing.”
When you go to work, you want to feel like you are at home. Your office chair feels like your recliner, your monitor resembles your TV, and your email connects you to your closest co-workers. For Sommer, this is exactly how she feels when she comes to work every day.

Before starting at CABVI, Sommer was a licensed massage therapist. She found it to be fun, and she had the opportunity to interact with people while making them feel at ease. Certain job necessities, however, were missing - such as financial security, benefits, paid time off, and job stability. When Sommer started at CABVI in 2008, she was contracted through a temp agency as an administrative assistant.

After a few months, she applied for a job opening in CABVI's low vision center. Sommer knew she wanted to work full-time with the agency and this was her chance to become a permanent employee. Once she found out she got the job, she knew she was home.

Over the next few years, she transitioned from the low vision center to the business office. While working in the accounts receivable segment of the business office, Sommer was contacted about a job offer that was too good to pass up. For one year, she left the CABVI family to explore her options.

“When I left, I was very excited because the job I was offered seemed like it was a better opportunity,” said Sommer. “After some time, though, I felt like a number instead of an employee. Luckily, I kept in touch with my old co-workers at CABVI and they informed me of a job opening.”

Her current title, Product Development Program Coordinator, was the job she applied for. It was a newly created position, but since the agency was growing rapidly, it was essential for the success of the sales and marketing department.

“When I came back, I knew this is where I was supposed to be,” said Sommer. “I felt like I was coming home again. It’s nice to have that feeling and to get a warm welcome when you step into the office for the first time in over a year.”

Sommer is a vital asset because of her extensive knowledge of the agency. With her background in the business office and the rehabilitation department, it provides her with a full circle view of how the agency operates. Sommer works to develop products that will become a sustainable source of income for CABVI. With her background, she understands that the profits from the products will go to support the services’ aspect of the organization.

Sommer’s position requires continuous training and an understanding of the agency’s bottom dollar. Katie Humphreys, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, has assisted Sommer with that process. In the last four years, she has attended two product development training conferences in Washington D.C. for the National Industries for the Blind, completed her green belt in the Lean Six Sigma program, and is a graduate of the 2016 Leadership Mohawk Valley class.

“I give a lot of thanks to Katie for pushing me as much as she did,” said Sommer. “It got me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to build self-confidence, become more independent, and not have fear when visiting conferences to learn about new products.”
One day, Amos woke up and experienced complete vision loss. He was 19, a certified electrician in both commercial and residential, and worked on his family’s farm. He went to bed one night and woke up eight hours later to darkness.

At the age of five, Amos was diagnosed with diabetes. Type 1 develops over time, and can be caused from a bad diet and living an unhealthy lifestyle. Type 2 is genetic, and that is what Amos had.

“Most of my family has type 2 diabetes, so I didn’t take it seriously,” said Amos. “I was young and I wanted to live my life like a kid. I ate what I wanted and didn’t pay attention to my insulin doses. Eventually, it caught up to me, and I developed diabetic retinopathy.”

During this drastic transition in his life, his parents reached out to CABVI for help. Within days, he was introduced to Betsy Harvey-Minutti, Senior Manager of Rehabilitation Clinical Services, Cindy Fruedenberger, case manager, and Jim Marscher, a former mobility instructor for the agency. They provided Amos with mobility training, cookware, placed bumps on objects around his house, and taught him how to do his laundry. Betsy also challenged him to eat better, exercise, and to pay attention to his insulin doses. Even though Amos appreciated it, he was still not happy with the situation.

Shortly after receiving services, Amos was approached about working at CABVI Central Industries. He was thrilled. Prior to the job offer, he would sit in his bedroom and listen to baseball games all day.

“It was like a breath of fresh air. I could work again,” said Amos. “My whole life, I worked hard and felt accomplished. When I couldn't work on my family's farm, or as an electrician anymore, a part of me didn't feel whole.”

During his time in Central Industries, he worked on the glove line for a year and a half, and as a material handler for a year and half. After three years of working in production, an opportunity in the Contact Center opened. Amos was one of several individuals to apply, and after two interviews, he was hired.

This was a huge opportunity for him, but he was extremely nervous.

“I was not computer savvy and never had a desk job before,” said Amos. “Tamra, the adaptive employment technology specialist at the time, taught me the skills I needed to succeed in my newly acquired positon. She taught me various software programs, including Microsoft Word, Excel, and Job Access with Speech, better known as JAWS.”

For five years, Amos worked in the Contact Center managing inbound and outbound calls under a federal contract for CABVI's client. He gained professional skills, communication skills, and computer skills during his time there. Working at the Contact Center is what enabled him to be in the position he holds today, as an E-Commerce Sales and Business Development Associate. Amos interacts with current and future customers, and increases online sales for CABVI’s Base Supply Centers.

Amos is enrolled at Mohawk Valley Community College and recently made the dean’s list. He has completed several Boilermaker 15k road races, ridden in the Ride for Missing Children numerous times, and, at one point, was ranked number one in the country for Judo at 66 kg.
AMOS ACKERMAN
E-COMMERCE SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
Four years ago, Joe worked at Express Employment Professionals and became a camp counselor, for the first time, with CABVI’s Camp Abilities program. As a student at the State University of New York at Cortland, he majored in sports management and minored in economics. And, as is the case with many college students, Joe was in the process of figuring out his future. Until one day, a vehicle drove by his apartment in Cortland.

“I was on my front porch having a cup of coffee when this car drives by and comes to a complete stop,” said Joe. “As the car reversed, I saw Kathy Beaver, CABVI’s Vice President of Rehabilitation, rolling down her window. Naturally, I invited her in for a coffee and, two hours later, I was reconsidering my entire career path.”

After Kathy and Joe met, his mindset shifted and he knew exactly what he wanted to do after college. During his final year at Cortland, he shadowed Laura Yakey, CABVI’s Rehabilitation Employment Supervisor, and Betsy Harvey-Minutti, Senior Manager of Rehabilitation Clinical Services. Joe wanted to get a real feel for what vision rehabilitation entailed and to see if his heart was guiding him in the right direction.

Shortly thereafter, Kathy offered him a job as a vision rehabilitation therapist (VRT) and orientation and mobility specialist (O&M). However, this was contingent on Joe getting into Hunter College’s VRT and O&M graduate program.

That same week, he applied for the VRT and O&M program.

After two months of waiting, Joe heard back from Hunter College’s admissions office; he was accepted. Once his acceptance letter came in, Joe eagerly called Kathy to share the great news. She congratulated him on the milestone and told him that he had a job at CABVI once he graduated from Cortland.

Joe was ecstatic, and after one week of becoming a college graduate, CABVI hired him for the rehabilitation department.

“This is something I never considered as an option for a career,” said Joe. “I work with individuals of all ages and teach them how to cook, clean, get dressed, navigate in their schools, and how to become more independent. In the end, Camp Abilities was the life changing experience that brought me here.”

In his time here, Joe has piloted Dan Phillips, CABVI social worker, in the Ride for Missing Children three times, helped coordinate several Camp Abilities programs, and served hundreds of individuals throughout CABVI’s eight county service area. In January of 2018, he completed his master’s program in VRT and O&M from Hunter College, and made the International Honor Society with a GPA of 3.73.
## Financial Statement 2017

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Industries Sales</td>
<td>$51,178,934</td>
<td>$45,770,185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Base Supply Center Sales</td>
<td>$7,508,532</td>
<td>$7,060,364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions &amp; Bequests</td>
<td>$828,156</td>
<td>$1,249,877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Program Income</td>
<td>$942,698</td>
<td>$920,594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain on Sale of Investments</td>
<td>$343,981</td>
<td>$34,636</td>
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**Total Operating Revenue**  
$60,802,301  $55,035,656

### Operating Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Industries Program</td>
<td>$42,767,873</td>
<td>$38,164,843</td>
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<tr>
<td>Base Supply Centers Merchandise</td>
<td>$7,005,803</td>
<td>$6,747,024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Program</td>
<td>$1,674,228</td>
<td>$1,722,677</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and Administrative</td>
<td>$1,764,708</td>
<td>$1,646,500</td>
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<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>$1,433,752</td>
<td>$1,398,459</td>
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<td>Public Education / Communications</td>
<td>$281,897</td>
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<td>Development</td>
<td>$236,354</td>
<td>$184,908</td>
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**Total Operating Expenses**  
$55,164,615  $50,117,782

### Ending Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution &amp; Bequests</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Industries Sales</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Program Income</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base Supply Store Sales</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ending Net Assets**  
$47,332,475  $40,934,085

---

**2017 Revenue**  
- Base Supply Store Sales: 12%
- Central Industries Sales: 84%
- Rehabilitation Program Income: 2%

**2017 Expenses**  
- Base Supply Stores Merchandise: 13%
- Central Industries Program: 77%
- Rehabilitation Program: 3%
- Occupancy: 3%
- Management and Administrative: 4%
Consumers Served by Gender
- Male - 38% (636)
- Female - 62% (1,028)

Consumers Served by Age
- 0-18 - 9% (147)
- 19-60 - 17% (290)
- 61-80 - 27% (453)
- 81 and up - 47% (774)

Consumers Served by County
- Otsego - 1% (19)
- Montgomery - 5% (82)
- Fulton - 4% (73)
- Herkimer - 10% (164)
- Jefferson - 7% (119)
- Lewis - 3% (58)
- Madison - 11% (178)
- Other - 5% (79)
- Oneida - 54% (892)

Consumers Referred By
- State VR Counselor - 4% (33)
- Veteran’s Administration - 0% (1)
- CABVI Staff - 22% (196)
- Eye Care Provider - 13% (119)
- Family Member or Friend - 14% (120)
- Medical Provider - 2% (17)
- Other - 6% (50)
- Outreach - 2% (16)

2017 Most Common Causes of Visual Impairment Among Consumer Intakes
- Congenital/Birth Injury - 39
- Cataracts - 53
- Diabetic Retinopathy - 62
- Glaucoma - 115
- Other - 276
- Macular Degeneration - 432

2017 Volunteer Stats
- 418 volunteers | 21,440 hours
- 1644 consumers served in 2017
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.

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