

**2023 Annual Report***Reaching New Heights*

**A Message From Glen Vogel, Board Chair and Teri Shirk, President/CEO**

Reaching New Heights depends on developing opportunities and preparing for the future. This past year, CABVI experienced many exciting changes in the agency.

* In 2023, 4,000 individuals with significant vision loss were served through a full array of services including social services, low vision, assistive technology, music therapy, early childhood and youth services, vision rehabilitation therapy, information services and orientation and mobility.
* Early Childhood and Youth Services provided six students ages 15 - 17 with a new 5-week transitional work experience. The students assisted day camp counselors at the Cincinnati Museum Center. Youth service was supported by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and provided transition-age students with vision loss an introduction to work experiences while earning a paycheck.
* CABVI team members committed themselves to systems upgrades, rolling out a new Enterprise Resource Program which modernizes access to data, planning tools, inventory management, and client record keeping. The new comprehensive system, which reaches across all divisions, will create new efficiencies allowing team members to focus on services and deliver our mission.
* CABVI completed new, mission-based spaces this year thanks to generous funding from our community partners and a federal government grant. Our Orientation & Mobility and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy teams, serving the community by providing travel training and independent living skills, moved into their tech-smart suite mid-year.
* As 2023 came to a close, construction of our new Assistive Technology Training Center was completed. The new, modernized area is home to our own “Apple Store” style demo room featuring a wide array of vision related technology, three individual learning rooms, bright and open staff offices, and a large inclusive group learning space, the Community Learning Center.
* CABVI business lines continued to support the mission through the creation of employment and revenue. Route Transportation & Logistics along with the newly formed CABVI Logistics, its nonprofit counterpart, gained 23 new partnerships with nonprofit agencies across the country as well as the State of Ohio freight contract.
* VIE Ability Office Supplies achieved 32% growth by adding new sales from the State of Ohio as well as several commercial accounts. CABVI’s new contract with Ohio for delivery of office furniture allowed the agency to enter into an entirely new avenue of sales. Route and VIE Ability offer knowledge-based jobs to individuals with vision loss.
* Those who attended CABVI’s Fun Fest, Braille Ale, Braille Bourbon and Dining in the Dark events experienced a lively, generous atmosphere of giving and an opportunity to appreciate the challenges faced by our community members who experience vision loss. Community support for these events benefited CABVI’s services.
* In conjunction with the Federal AbilityOne program, CABVI employed more than 70 individuals with vision loss to provide the federal government with Contract Close-Out services, our Base Supply store at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the manufacturing of tape and paper products, as well as the assembly of kitchen gadgets for military resale. Our social enterprises directly support the provision of vision services.

2023 proved to be a transformative year for CABVI, one where we are Reaching New Heights! Thank you for your contributions of time, resources, and support as we look forward to a more impactful future.

**A Brighter Future for Nicholas**

Nicholas Michael, age 3, begins music therapy playing a very creative version of the Hello Song on one piano with Jen Ortiz, CABVI board certified music therapist, leading the song on a second piano. Every time they sing “Hello” his little sister Madeline waves and smiles and his mother Paige laughs as well. Music therapy helps with social skills, sequencing, and developing fine and gross motor skills. Nicholas loves playing drums and piano. He also chooses a couple of maracas for his little sister to play along. Their family attended CABVI's Drums in the Park event last summer with everyone participating in their own way “which evens out the playing field,” according to Paige.

Nicholas was born with congenital cataracts which were diagnosed around eight months. The cataracts were removed but he has partial vision with one eye stronger than the other. CABVI’s Early Intervention Services helped Nicholas' family to process the challenges of his vision loss and to help him learn to navigate new environments. They have attended several Accessible Playground events with CABVI to meet other families with children who have vision loss. Nicholas enjoyed learning to climb ladders and then slide down with extra assistance for safety. CABVI’s School Age services team is helping to advocate for Nicholas to get an IEP for vision as he is entering preschool and needs special support. For now, they are providing additional observation to see what he can and cannot do on his own. “This is especially helpful," says Paige, “since many people do not have experience with vision loss."

**Losing Sight, Finding Hope**

Carol Hayes was born in Lexington, KY, married Robert, a minister, in 1958 and taught elementary school for 40 years. She came to live at Marjorie P. Lee senior community two years ago when her declining vision made it necessary to live closer to her daughter, Lynn and son, Kerry. The community social worker referred Carol to CABVI since she moved there mainly because of her vision loss. CABVI’s low vision services prescribed vision aids including a hand-held lighted magnifier, a big eye lamp and her “real lifeline, my goose-neck lamp that sits on my all-purpose table.”

CABVI's Vision Rehabilitation Therapist helped Carol with adaptive daily living skills as well as large print and talking items. She also received a Say-When liquid level indicator that buzzes when her cup gets full. As an avid reader, Carol uses her Talking Book Machine to listen to books that she receives free through the mail. She recently learned to use her Alexa to listen to CABVI's Radio Reading Services (RRS) by saying “Open Cincinnati Radio Reading Services.” This gives her access to local and national printed information 24 hours a day. She says, “Losing independence is a terrible thing. Now I can do most everything I need to do with magnifiers, task lighting and audio books. All in all, I lead a pretty normal life.”

**Volunteer Spotlight**

A dynamic duo of “can-do,” Robert Harris and Robert Shuemak co-host the Radio Reading Services (RRS) podcast, “All Things Being Equal.” Harris began volunteering with RRS more than thirty years ago when his late wife, Gloria who was blind, served on a committee. Almost a year ago, Harris recruited Shuemak to help him with the show that “helps people with a disability to increase their empowerment and know that they are not alone," says Harris. Harris is well known for his lifetime of leadership positions with the National Association of Physically Handicapped (past President), Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (now OOD), City Hall Accessibility Board of Advisors, Metro/Sorta Board, Hamilton County DDS Board, Center of Independent Living Options, and much more.

Shuemak brings his expertise with assistive technology since he is an Advocacy Advisor and Assistive Technology Specialist for Hamilton County Development Disabilities Services. Shuemak says, “If there is a difficulty, there is likely a technology that could help.” He also understands the challenges of vision loss since he has received services from CABVI to help him to adapt to vision loss. Shuemak wants to give back to the community to use his gifts and talents to help others. Harris says, “For me, it is like breathing, give and take, helping people.”

**Team Member Award and Nominations**

*CABVI's Bradley L. Kaylor Blind Employee of the Year Award*

This award honors an employee who is blind and working in direct labor or service operations on an AbilityOne contract. The 2023 honoree is Venus Kincaid.

Venus is an outstanding employee in the Industries Program, working as a Packer Palletizer in the paper and tape area. She has been with CABVI for a total of 20 years, first as an Assembler for dining packets that were used in military flights around the world and then as a Packer.

Venus is a highly productive and reliable worker. She brings a great attitude to work every day and enjoys being with all types of people. As CABVI’s honoree, Venus will also be recognized by National Industries for the Blind (NIB) as a nominee for the nationally selected 2023 Peter J. Salmon Award.

Venus is an integral team-player and likes to bring her dedication to the job. “I truly enjoy my coworkers and the environment at CABVI,” says Venus. “I feel good about doing my part for the mission of the agency.”

*CABVI’s Mark Foersterling Program Services Team Member of the Year Award*

This award recognizes a team member who exemplifies CABVI’s core values and sets an example of excellence for others. It is named in memory of Mark Foersterling, who was instrumental in launching CABVI’s Access Technology Service. The 2023 honoree is Carla Schatzman.

In her previous position as low vision coordinator, Carla has always ensured that clinic days are full. Her warm manner when calling to schedule helps clients to feel hopeful and more comfortable coming in for low vision services. When Low Vision was tasked with working with the Hornbeck Social Enterprise Center for individualized lighting needs, Carla worked with Dr. Morgan on researching, ordering and testing a variety of lights to meet this important need. In regard to the pediatric clinic, Carla worked to order appropriate tests needed to operate efficiently.

Carla is compassionate, empathetic and has a strong moral compass. It is a testament to her knowledge that so many team members throughout the agency seek her out for information and guidance.

*National Industries for the Blind Milton J. Samuelson Award Nominee*

CABVI has nominated Robert J. Volker for the Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award through the National Industries for the Blind (NIB). Rob began employment with CABVI in 2013 as a part time, temporary Communication Center Coordinator. One year later, he was promoted to Communication Center Manager. Since then, he has been promoted three more times to his current position of Director of eCommerce and Retail. In the ten years that Rob has worked for CABVI, he has helped increase sales every year to create eight jobs for employees who are visually impaired.

Growing the office supply social enterprise helps support the cost of providing vision rehabilitation services at CABVI. (Sales were $51,000 in 2013 and $7.3 million in 2023.) Rob says, “I know how it is to be visually impaired and out of work. The more I can grow VIE Ability, the more opportunities for employment we can provide.”

Diagnosed with an eye disease called Choroideremia, Rob received Access Technology Services from CABVI as well as Orientation and Mobility Services to help him adapt to vision loss. In 2020, Rob earned his bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Southern New Hampshire University. He is looking forward to getting a guide dog and hopes to pursue his master’s degree.

*CABVI's Reimagined Award*

For 2023, we recognize Bryan Heeb and Kelley Young with the Reimagined Award since their contributions played a significant role in achieving our strategic goals.

Bryan Heeb served the agency for 9 years as the director of our sales team. He spent his career doing a job he loved. Bryan worked tirelessly to bring to fruition the dream of VIE Ability, a CABVI office supply business line employing individuals with vision loss. Bryan built amazing partnerships to accomplish the mission of CABVI, both internally and externally. Particularly with the State of Ohio, Bryan helped CABVI earn multiple business awards through the Community Rehabilitation Program. Bryan’s efforts brought CABVI contracts for custom signage, door hardware, furniture, and most notably the State of Ohio contract for office supplies in 2021. Bryan’s passion for the mission resulted in both new jobs for individuals with vision loss and significant growth in the funds needed for services to the community. Unfortunately, we lost Bryan to cancer in January. His contributions to the agency will be part of his legacy.

Throughout his time at CABVI, Bryan had the ideal partner in Kelley Young, Account Manager for VIE Ability office supplies. Each step of the way, Kelley was next to Bryan, driving to bring new opportunities to success. Kelley brings her entire effort to CABVI each and every day. She is tireless, persistent, and resilient. As the agency worked to grow employment within VIE Ability, Kelley showed her effort and strength as the builder of relationships that resulted in State-wide sales growing ten times in just a couple years. Kelley is a champion and a force for continuous growth, innovation, and opportunity. We are proud to present her with the 2024 Reimagined Award.

**CABVI Community Events**

Fun Fest - CABVI hosted the second annual Fun Fest, a free and accessible event in Washington Park on June 10th with a cornhole tournament, a live DJ set, beep baseball, carnival games, and food. Cincinnati Red’s Hall of Famer, Marty Brennaman kicked off the event by pitching in a special Beeping Baseball Homerun Derby. CABVI also offered optional beeping cornhole boards. Special thanks to Essendant as the presenting sponsor. Please join us for Fun Fest 2024 on June 8th from Noon-4pm at Washington Park.

Braille Ale® Release - CABVI and West Side Brewing celebrated the return of the award-winning Braille Ale® Raspberry Gose which was re-released on July 27th at West Side Brewing. Natalie Jones from Q102 hosted the event and Big Dogg’s BBQ food truck was on-site. CABVI also partnered with Cincy Shirts for the new "Brewing Awareness" tee to help spread the word about CABVI and Braille Ale®. By purchasing a shirt, individuals helped to brew awareness for those impacted by vision loss. A portion of all purchases support CABVI’s services.

Braille Bourbon Whiskey Release - CABVI celebrated the release of Braille Bourbon Volume Two in partnership with Northside Distilling Co. on September 20th. The limited edition, hand-numbered bottle includes braille on the label and aims to raise awareness around inclusivity for people who are blind or visually impaired in our community as well as highlighting the services CABVI offers to help individuals adapt to vision loss. A portion of each bottle sold support CABVI’s services.

Dining in the Dark... A Night at the Disco - Thanks so much to all those who participated in CABVI’s 7th Annual Dining in the Dark. With generous support from more than 500 guests, CABVI raised nearly $250,000 to help individuals adapt to vision loss. CABVI honored the Barney H. Kroger Humanitarian Award winner, Mary Caposela. CABVI client, Thomas Davis, shared his story of how CABVI’s services helped him increase his independence. Natalie Jones from Q102 and Anna Marie from B105 emceed. Guests learned about daily challenges faced by individuals with vision loss by eating with a blindfold. Participants enjoyed a silent auction, a live auction, a wine raffle, a bourbon raffle, split the pot, and a costume contest. All proceeds support CABVI’s services. Special thanks to our Exclusive Presenting Sponsor, Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati.

Save the date for our Wonka-themed Dining in the Dark—A Night of Pure Imagination on November 9, 2024 at Hard Rock Casino. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Aaron Bley at 513-487-4233.

**Social Enterprises**

CABVI is Reaching New Heights through providing employment opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired both locally and remotely. Since 1911, CABVI has been providing employment and continues providing more jobs to reduce the national 65% unemployment rate for people with severe vision loss (as reported by the American Foundation for the Blind).

Custom Signage - At our cutting-edge signage facility, CABVI employees operate a variety of printing, cutting, and laser equipment that produces superior products that continuously exceed industry standards. Our full-service signage center includes ADA compliant, braille, and tactile signage as well as customized signage in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor sign options. These include PVC, banners, corrugated, polymetal, and aluminum. We also provide photoluminescent signs. Using the latest design, printing and cutting technology including larger monitors, our lasers are accessible for operators with vision loss. Signage purchases support CABVI’s mission.

Industries Program - CABVI produces over 200 different paper, tape and assembled products for the government and commercial market. CABVI has been assembling kitchen gadgets for over 30 years and also assembles batteries and door hardware. CABVI is proud to partner with OXO, 3M and other companies to produce high quality, competitive products. Hornbeck Social Enterprise Center staff have been working on adaptive technology enhancements, equipment and machinery upgrades, team member training and cross training, and other ways to increase accessibility and reduce waste.

Route Transportation and Logistics, Inc. - CABVI acquired Florida-based Route Transportation and Logistics in 2022 as a way of offering new job opportunities for people with vision loss. Route’s remote-first approach eliminates transportation concerns, a common work barrier to individuals with vision loss. This vital partnership will provide more career opportunities for individuals with vision loss as well as helping support the cost of services. Route added 23 new customers through the National Industries for the Blind and CABVI network in 2023.

VIE Ability - In 2023, VIE Ability had a 32% growth year with $7.3 million in sales in connection with the State of Ohio contract. This success continues to grow crucial customer service jobs for people who have vision loss. With 60,000+ items available, VIE Ability customers are pleased with competitive prices, next day free delivery, and no minimums. Every time someone places an office supply order, our employees are checking inventory levels, managing logistics and making sure the orders are on a truck for next-day delivery. This is done with the help of advanced computer magnification and screen reading software. VIE Ability is a purpose-driven initiative of CABVI with most team members experiencing vision loss.

**2023 Donors**

CABVI gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions of our donors whose cumulative giving in support of our mission totals $100 or more. These gifts have a tremendous impact on the programs and services we provide for people with vision loss. Thank you for your generosity to CABVI.

**For the 2023 financial summary, please contact CABVI at 513-520-4519.**

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