



**THE BLIND
& VISUALLY
IMPAIRED
CENTER**
OF MONTEREY COUNTY INC.

BLINDFOLD

225 Laurel Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950 831-649-3505 www.blindandlowvision.org

Summer 2020

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Response to COVID-19

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County resumed in-office operations on Monday, July 6, 2020. Following strict State and local health guidelines, along with implementing new office protocols, we have made the following changes to our office:

- 1) Implemented social distancing procedures;
- 2) Implemented hourly and daily disinfectant procedures;
- 3) Implemented a staff wellness plan, including daily temperature checks;
- 4) Implemented bi-monthly support groups via Zoom;
- 5) Limited office hours and client/staff interactions.

Braille and Ceramic Classes

In compliance with State and local Shelter-in-Place Orders, braille and ceramic classes are cancelled until further notice.

Contact Us

The Blind & Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County, Inc.

Address: 225 Laurel Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

Telephone: 831-649-3505

Toll-Free: 1-800-404-3505 (in Monterey County)

Fax: 831-649-4057

Email: vision@blindandlowvision.org

Website: www.blindandlowvision.org

Peer Support Group

In response to COVID-19, The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County resumed bi-monthly support groups via Zoom in April 2020. The support group is peer led and meets every other Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. For more information, including Zoom access, contact Steven Macias, Executive Director at 831-649-3505.

Community Outreach

Community Outreach is a growing service offered by The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County. We provide low vision training to service providers, attend health fairs, and present information sessions at senior living communities and in the wider community.

To submit event invites in 2021, contact Steven Macias, Executive Director at 831-649-3505.

A MESSAGE FROM TOM GARDNER, BOARD PRESIDENT

As the year of COVID-19 continues to impact everyone's lives, we must all do what we can to stay healthy, safe, and focused on what is important by implementing ways to accomplish this goal.

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County has been in a neutral place since the Shelter-in-Place Orders took effect, but plans have been put into place to allow the Center to open its doors and continue to serve our clients.

I am looking forward to working with Steven Macias, our new Executive Director, the great staff and the Board of Directors to move forward with our goals of finding new board members, expanding fundraising efforts, and raising awareness of what The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County does to improve the independence of our clients; most importantly, how we benefit the community throughout the County of Monterey.

"Those who make the worst use of their time, are the first to complain of its brevity."

-Jean de La Bruyère

You can contact me at 831-649-3505 or wccrud@aol.com.

A MESSAGE FROM STEVEN MACIAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our mission at The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County is to empower the blind and visually impaired toward independent living through educational services, support services and essential skills training.

We accomplish our mission through our dedicated staff and through programs ranging from Orientation and Mobility to Assistive Technology Services and Vision Rehabilitation. We also provide the only civilian low-vision clinic in Monterey County.

Growing up on the Monterey Peninsula, I have strived to give back to my community, whether through working in non-profits or working with our youth. My father, a seasoned optician recognized throughout California, has emphasized to my siblings and me the importance of eye health.

My goals for the Center include a strong expansion into Salinas and the Salinas Valley, the creation of a mobile clinic that provides access to vision care to all in our community and strengthening existing community relationships while fostering new ones. Thanks to your support, we can continue our vital efforts.

These are difficult times, and The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County is here to help with your low vision needs. We offer a variety of in-house services and bi-monthly peer led support groups.

For more information, contact me at 831-649-3505 or steven@blindandlowvision.org.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

In today's world, many want to be up to date with the newest gadgets to maintain their independence. As we age, we can expect to experience diminished vision along with hearing loss. At any age, it is important for a person to be able to perform their daily activities. One device that may be helpful is a large button talking clock.

To operate, push the top and hear the time; pushing the button a second time will say the date. This clock comes with an adjustable volume to be easily heard. This is one of the many products available at The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County that can greatly improve quality of life.



Product Showcase: BuzzClip from iMerciv, Inc.



The BuzzClip is a small and discreet wearable device for people living with blindness or partial sight. The device uses ultrasound to detect obstacles that are in one's path. It notifies the user of these obstacles through intuitive vibrations, allowing the user to safely navigate around objects that they may encounter. The BuzzClip offers essential head level obstacle detection and can be easily held or attached to most clothing, making it a highly versatile and useful device.

The BuzzClip is a practical mobility tool that can reduce fears of traveling. It is a reliable way to inform a user of their immediate surroundings and to prevent collisions.

iMerciv, Inc, creators of the BuzzClip, put a spin on existing ultrasound technology and believe that the BuzzClip can dramatically change the lives of people living with blindness or severe vision loss.

The BuzzClip complements a cane and can also be used on its own for those with partial sight looking for a subtle solution. Its versatility allows the user to creatively use the device for their specific vision needs.

Utilizing a device like the BuzzClip can greatly improve day-to-day life for a person living with blindness or severe vision loss by reducing accidents and irritable injuries, improving independence and confidence, quickening rehabilitation and training, reducing care and rehabilitation costs, reducing fear of mobility, all while providing a hands-free solution.



For more information or to request a demonstration, contact us at 831-649-3505 or vision@blindandlowvision.org.

Product Showcase: ScripTalk Station from En-Vision America

ScripTalk Station is a prescription reader device. Simply press the button and place the special ScripTalk label over the reader. The unit speaks all the information printed on the label.

ScripTalk Station uses radio frequency identification and text-to-speech technology. A thin antenna and microchip embedded within the label are programmed with all the printed information. Because the data is stored in the label itself, it can be used on any size prescription container.

This device will say the drug name, dosage and instructions, warnings, pharmacy information, doctor's names, prescription number, and date.



For more information on how to have your pharmacy participate and issue your prescriptions with a ScripTalk Station, call En-Vision America at 1-800-890-1180.

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CENTER FINDS SUCCESS IN ZOOM SUPPORT GROUP

In April 2020, in response to COVID-19, The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County transitioned from in-person support groups to online through Zoom. The first meeting online was well received, with 14 total clients in attendance. The next meeting held several weeks later boasted 15 clients. On average, 13 clients have regularly attended the online support group.

"I believe this is a necessary step to keep in contact with clients, while observing the County of Monterey and California's Shelter-in-Place Orders" says Steven Macias, Executive Director. "Most of our clients fall into the most susceptible group. We feel that by continuing to limit The Blind and Visually Impaired Center's activities, we can best protect our clients. We know it is necessary to find a way to keep in contact with those we serve."

Clients have found the online support group beneficial, and regular attendees have expressed appreciation for the Zoom format. One client described the Zoom support group as "beyond helpful," as the client was able to clearly hear the group for the first time from the comfort of his own home.

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County will continue to provide support groups through Zoom until further notice.

The highly successful support group is peer led and meets every other Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. For more information, including Zoom access, contact Steven Macias, Executive Director at 831-649-3505 or steven@blindandlowvision.org.

ETTIQUETTE FOR BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED, KAREN LEVIN, VISION REHABILITATION SPECIALIST

If you see an individual who is blind or visually impaired that seems to need help, offer your services. Speak directly to them, not through a third party. Identify yourself and let them know you are talking to them. If your help is refused, do not be offended.

If you assist an individual who is blind or visually impaired, offer your arm. They will take your arm, find your elbow and grasp it with a letter 'C' shape or as in holding a soda can. This will allow them to follow your motions.

When you leave the individual who is blind or visually impaired, say so. Be specific, use phrases such as "I'm going to get lemons in the produce section and will be back in five minutes." Do not leave the person stranded. Tell them that there is a seating area located at the front of the store that has chairs and tables. Take the person there to wait so they can sit down.

When giving directions to an individual who is blind or visually impaired, it is important to give them clear and precise directions ("turn to your right" or "turn to your left"). Do not point and say over there. It is important to provide specific names (streets, buildings) in places the individual is familiar with.

When serving, tell them what food is being served using the clock technique. Tell them that potatoes are at the 6 o'clock position and that the meat is at the 12 o'clock position.

It is important when working with an individual who is blind or visually impaired to leave things where you found them. Moving items makes it harder for them to locate the object and they will be searching for a longer length of time.

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County is willing to assist with additional etiquette and training. Contact us at 831-649-3505 or vision@blindandlowvision.org.

RESOURCE PRESENTATION AT THE CARMEL FOUNDATION

On Wednesday, March 4, 2020 Esmeralda Ortiz, Orientation and Mobility Specialist at The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County, presented at the Resource Presentation at The Carmel Foundation. The well attended event focused on free resources for the blind and visually impaired. Joining Ms. Ortiz at the event was the Center's Intake Assistant and Receptionist Marisa Vallejo who showcased her guide dog and spoke on programs and resource available for individuals with blindness or visual impairment.



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Ways to Donate

You can make a tax-deductible gift online through PayPal at www.blindandlowvision.org/give/

or by mail to: The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County, Inc.

225 Laurel Avenue
Pacific Grove, California 93950

Federal Tax ID #23-7221588

Endowment Fund

Did you know that over the years, many of our clients and donors have left a bequest to the Center? Their gifts have been used to establish a modest endowment fund. The Board uses earnings from the fund to expand programming, purchase equipment, or supplement the annual operating budget.

Chariots for Charity

Operated by the Monterey Old Capitol Lions Club, Chariots for Charity vehicle donations support The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County Center with cash donations from the sale of donated vehicles. Operated since 1985, the Chariots program has raised more than \$350,000 to support the Center.

For more information or to donate a vehicle, contact Russ Hatch at 831-659-5360.