VISION LOSS AND HEARING LOSS 101:
FEBRUARY 13, FOXDALE VILLAGE, 7:00 PM

JOINT MEETING OF SIGHT-LOSS SUPPORT GROUP OF CENTRAL PA & HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CENTRAL PA CHAPTER

Hearing loss and sight loss, two sensory losses that impact so many lives. There is lots of hope and help available and this meeting will connect you to that help.

For our February meeting we join forces with the Hearing Loss Association of America, Central PA Chapter, to present an overview of services provided by the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (part of the PA Department of Labor and Industry). Representatives from the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) and the Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing will give us a virtual tour of the services that help Pennsylvanians navigate a new life with vision loss and hearing loss. We are fortunate to have both sensory losses explored in one evening.

Steve Ketchisen, a social worker with the Independent Living program, will be our virtual tour guide from BBVS. Steve has worked with blind and visually impaired seniors and children for many years. He will present an overview of BBVS’s services for Pennsylvanians in all walks of life.
We hope you can join us on Monday, February 13 at Foxdale Village at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held on the 2nd floor. If you have any questions, please call the SLSG office at (814) 238-0132.

WINTER 2017 AUDIO-DESCRIBED EVENTS

If you enjoy award-winning musical productions, the 2017 winter/spring schedule of audio-described events will have you singing and dancing! The Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State's shows include 42nd Street, Once, Pippin, and Rent. FUSE productions is offering Cabaret and State High is tackling How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying. Hope you can join us!

REMINDER: Audio-description services are now by RESERVATION ONLY. To reserve audio-description services please call the Sight-Loss Support Group of Central PA at (814) 238-0132, or email at office@slsg.org AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE of a performance. Leave your name and phone number plus the name and date of the performance. We will return your call.

Center for the Performing Arts, Penn State:

ONCE: Tuesday, January 31, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.

Winner of eight 2012 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Once features an impressive ensemble of actors/musicians who play their own instruments onstage. Once is the tale of a struggling Dublin street musician, about to give up on his dreams when he finds romance with a woman who connects with his haunting love songs. Please reserve the AD service by Jan. 17. See Ticket Information.

PIPPIN: Tuesday, March 21, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.
A mysterious performance troupe, led by a Leading Lady, tells the story of a young prince on his search for meaning and significance. This Tony Award-winning musical, with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (Wicked), combines extraordinary acrobatics, magical feats, and soaring songs to create a magical performance. Please reserve the AD service by Mar.7. See Ticket Information.

**RENT**: Thursday, April 6, 7:30 pm, Eisenhower Auditorium.

It’s the 20th anniversary national tour of Rent, the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning rock musical that changed the landscape of American theater in 1996. A re-imagining of Giacomo Puccini’s La Boheme, Rent follows a year in the lives of seven artists struggling to follow their dreams without selling out. Please reserve the AD service by Mar.23. See Ticket Information.

**Local Audio-described Productions:**

**CABARET**: Saturday, February 18, 7:30 pm, Schwab Auditorium.

FUSE Productions presents Cabaret, the Tony Award-winning musical about following your heart while the world loses its way, with music by John Knader and lyrics by Fred Ebb. Welcome to the infamous Kit Kat Klub, where the Emcee, Sally Bowles and a raucous ensemble take the stage nightly to tantalize the crowd. Come hear some of the most memorable songs in theater history, including “Cabaret,” “Willkommen” and “Maybe This Time.” Leave your troubles outside...life is beautiful at Cabaret. Please reserve the AD service by Feb.4. See Ticket Information.

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING**: Sunday, April 2, 2:00 pm, State College Area High School Auditorium.
The State High Thespians present a tune-filled comic gem that took Broadway by storm, winning both the Tony Award for Best Musical and a Pulitzer Prize. **How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying** boasts an exhilarating score by Frank Loesser, including "I Believe in You," "Brotherhood of Man," and "The Company Way."

A satire of big business and all it holds sacred, the musical follows the rise of J. Pierrepont Finch, who uses a little handbook to climb the corporate ladder from lowly window washer to high-powered executive, tackling such familiar but potent dangers as the aggressively compliant "company man," the office party, backstabbing coworkers, caffeine addiction and, of course, true love. Please reserve the AD service by Mar.19. See Ticket Information.

**Special Audio-described Tour:**

**KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR:** Studio Glass at the Palmer, Wednesday, April 26, 1:00 PM, Palmer Museum of Art, at Penn State University.

Interest in contemporary glass has grown exponentially in recent years, more than a half century after the founding of the studio glass movement in the early 1960s. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, the Palmer Museum of Art is poised to become one of the preeminent destinations for studio glass on the East Coast. **Kaleidoscope** highlights newly acquired works, as well as a selection of pieces from private collections. Represented will be an international roster of glass artists working today. Audio-describers will usher you through this excellent exhibit. No ticket is required for this event, but please contact the SLSG office by April 12 to join us for this free event.

**TICKET INFORMATION:**

The performances at Penn State’s Center for the Performing Arts are very popular, so please order your tickets as soon as
possible. Complimentary tickets are available for patrons who are visually impaired. Each visually impaired patron may reserve two tickets, the second ticket being for a companion. To reserve these special tickets, call Shannon Bishop at the Center for the Performing Arts box office, (814) 865-5011. Please do not call the general box office number.

NOTE: Subsidized tickets are often available for local performances; check with the SLSG office before purchasing your tickets.

State College Area High School Box Office: (814) 231-4188.

FUSE Productions: https://fuseproductions.thunderpix.com or (814) 308-8672.

Be sure to arrive 30 minutes before the performance to pick up your audio description equipment at the Audience Services desk. The audio describers for the performance begin their notes on the play 15 minutes prior to the performance (and they are excellent), so please be in your seats by 7:15 pm for a 7:30 pm show.

VISION LOSS RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

If you are new to vision loss, it’s hard to know where to begin. Learning to live with diminished sight or no sight at all is a huge adjustment. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed and feelings of sadness, fear, anger and frustration are common.

So, where does one begin? Here are three first steps: 1) Find the state agency that provides vision rehabilitation services and make an appointment. The counselor or social worker will visit you in your home. 2) Find a support group and connect with other people who are learning to live with vision loss. 3) Educate yourself about the many services, resources, and organizations that serve visually impaired individuals and their families. Let’s get started.
Vision Rehabilitation Services

Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) is the state agency in the Department of Labor and Industry that provides vision rehabilitation services to all blind and visually impaired Pennsylvanians. Make this your first call. Most of central Pennsylvania is served by the Altoona District office: (866) 695-7673. Clearfield County is served by the Erie District office: (866) 521-5073.

The Pennsylvania Association for the Blind (PAB) offers a range of services through a network of 26 member agencies throughout Pennsylvania. Services include life skills training, in-home support services, and social and recreational support groups. Central Pennsylvania is served by the following PAB agencies:

North Central Sight Services, Inc.
- Williamsport Headquarters: (866) 320-2580
- Bellefonte Branch and Low Vision Store: (814) 424-7183

Nu Visions Center, Lewistown: (717) 242-1444

Blair/Clearfield Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired: Altoona (814) 944-2021; Clearfield (888) 91-BLIND

Veterans Health Administration: James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona provides a continuum of care for visually impaired veterans and service members. (877) 626-2500; www.altoona.va.gov/

Support Resources

Sight-Loss Support Group of Central PA provides information and referral services and peer support for individuals with sight loss. (814) 238-0132; www.slsg.org
National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Happy Valley Chapter, connects blind individuals in central Pennsylvania with one another and the national organization of the NFB.

Adjustment to Blindness: Online Resources

VisionAware Website provides a wealth of self-help information and links to a wide range of helpful information to enhance the quality of life and independence for adults with vision loss and their families. [www.visionaware.org](http://www.visionaware.org)


Eye Disorders: Online Resources


American Macular Degeneration Foundation is a clearinghouse for research on macular degeneration and promotes a support system for individuals living with macular degeneration. [www.macular.org](http://www.macular.org)

Glaucoma Research Foundation provides information on the causes, care and treatment of glaucoma and current research on glaucoma. [www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org)

LOW-VISION DEVICES – WHAT ARE THEY?

Low-vision devices can help you make the most of your vision so that you can perform everyday tasks more easily and with less frustration. Some devices are very simple and relatively inexpensive, while others, such as electronic and digital...
magnifiers, may be slightly more complex and costly. There are several different categories of low-vision devices: optical devices, nonoptical devices, and electronic and magnifying systems.

**Low-Vision Optical Devices** include a variety of aids including stand and hand-held magnifiers, strong magnifying reading glasses, loupes and small telescopes. These devices can provide greatly increased magnification powers and prescription strengths, along with higher quality optics, and cannot be purchased in a local store or online. Most often they require training to use them effectively.

**Low-Vision Nonoptical Devices** include adaptations such as reading stands, supplemental lighting, glare control sunglasses, typoscopes, and tactile locator dots. They can be used in combination with low vision optical devices and can help with reading, organizing, labeling, and a variety of everyday tasks.

**Electronic Magnifying Systems** come in many different varieties and sizes. Some have a camera system that displays a magnified image on a monitor, which can be helpful for reading mail, books, and magazines. Other devices are hand-held, portable, and can be taken to the supermarket to read labels and coupons, or to restaurants for reading menus.

These devices are often recommended as part of a low-vision exam conducted by a low-vision specialist. This is the best way to decide what type of device or devices are best for you, your eye condition, and your everyday living needs. A low-vision specialist is an ophthalmologist or optometrist with a specialization in low-vision testing, diagnosis, and treatment. At your low-vision evaluation, you will have the opportunity to try a variety of devices in a variety of settings and learn first-hand how they can work for you.

*This article was adapted from the VisionAware website.*
Calling all community members!

Become a View Via Headphones AUDIO-DESCRIPTION and help make the visual and performing arts more accessible.

During a live presentation, an AUDIO-DESCRIPTION transmits verbal description of the visual elements of theatre and dance performances to people with low vision or sight loss, who wear an earphone and hold a palm-sized receiver to hear the transmission. Art and museum exhibits, specialty tours, and other events are also described. This service is provided free to interested people, whether sight-impaired or not.

We seek individuals with:

- Pleasant and easily understood voices with distinct pronunciation
- Capacity to provide vivid, accurate, oral descriptions of colors, shapes, forms, performers’ body language, lighting, scenery, costumes, stage business, special effects, and so on
- Willingness and ability to research each show and verbalize notes to an audience
- Love of the arts and desire to provide a community service
- Anticipated residence in the region for at least 3 years after training

Trainees will need to:

- Shadow or apprentice alongside experienced describers by attending a variety of plays, musicals, dance performances, etc. and listening carefully to the audio-description process
- Audition by watching videotaped scenes on TV and then describing the scenes’ visual elements while being tape-recorded
- Attend subsequent training sessions provided by certified audio describers

Please contact:

The Sight-Loss Support Group of Central PA, 814-238-0132, to leave your name and phone number for more information. You will receive a return call from an AD coordinator.
NEED A MAGNIFIER?

Two Screen Magnifier Systems (X50) have been donated to the Sight-Loss-Support Group. These are available to be loaned at no cost to a visually-impaired individual. One is an Optelec System about the size of a microwave oven, the other is a Video Eye Sidekick System mounted on a small table. If you are interested in using one of these systems in your home, please contact the office (814-238-0132 or office@slsg.org).

Remember to check our website (www.slsq.org) for announcements, updates and further information.

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