



VisionServe Alliance

Spring 2018 – Issue 1

LINKS

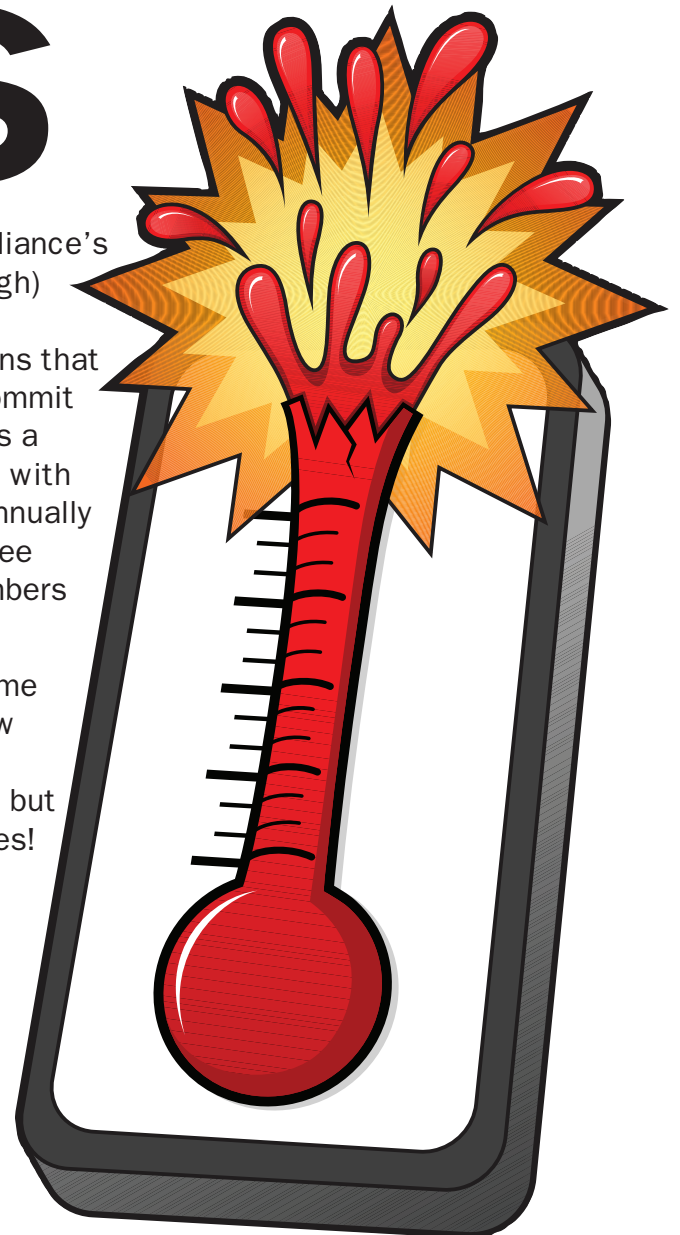
Learning • Innovation • Networking • Knowledge • Sharing

EXPLOSIVE NEWS

In 2017 we celebrated the anniversary of VisionServe Alliance's 30th year of incorporation. Erika Petach (BVRP-Pittsburgh) chaired a very committed Fund Development Committee who set an initial goal of raising \$15,000 in new donations that included the number three in it. Erika was the first to commit \$300 in addition to the commitment she already made as a board member. Board and Committee members followed with their own new commitments like \$30/month, \$1,000/annually for three years, and \$333. Once the Board and Committee made their pledges, the campaign was taken to our members who also responded, some very creatively.

In our last LINKS issue, we promised to reveal the outcome of the 30/300/3000 Campaign after the start of the new year and we are pleased to report to you that the Fund Development's goal of raising \$15,000 was not only met but it exploded into \$40,473.32 in new donations and pledges!

Thank you to everyone who pledged and donated. Your donations are already making an impact growing our capacity and infrastructure starting with the launch of a new website December 1st last year which has modernized the public image of VisionServe Alliance.



Chairman's Message

Mark G. Ackermann, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Lighthouse Guild International

While those of us in certain parts of the country are longing for the cold weather to be over and for the warmth of spring to arrive, change of another sort, is in the air. VERY BIG CHANGE! By now, I hope you have read my message to all members, which was forwarded to everyone on February 5th (see full text on our website). For the first time in the history of our Alliance, we are planning for the smooth transition of our CEO to a new chief executive.



Roxann Mayros became the CEO of VisionServe Alliance in 2005. Twelve years later, this organization has grown into one of the finest trade associations of its kind. I say, "of its kind," intentionally, because Roxann has clearly molded VisionServe Alliance into a very special organization that caters to the needs of the CEO's of all our agencies, while at the same time offering educational and professional development opportunities to the senior staff members of our member agencies.

The VisionServe board has undertaken a search process that is designed to culminate in the naming of our new CEO late next fall. A Position Specification will be made available late February and VisionServe Alliance members will be invited to apply or nominate individuals. Thereafter the search will be opened to the public. Your input is welcome throughout the process.



CEO Corner

Roxann Mayros, VisionServe Alliance, St. Louis, MO

It was with a sense of excitement and a heavy heart that I notified VisionServe's board of my intent to retire on December 31, 2018. At each annual meeting, I thank our members for allowing me to serve in the "best job in the field," and I mean it.



My thirteen-year tenure has given me noble work, new knowledge, meaningful relationships, a sense of purpose, and a passion for our field that goes beyond explanation.

I will be forever grateful for the opportunities to work with a series of board chairs and directors that provided me support and the freedom to grow this great organization.

My first real job was at age 12, and I've been working ever since. So even though I think I'm too young to retire, I also know that I'm ready to smell the proverbial roses a bit, try my hand at new things, share my knowledge of this great field we work in on my terms, travel a bit, and spend a lot more time with my granddaughter.

Thank you for allowing me to work for you! It has been the best job of my life!



2018 Board of Directors

Chair: Mark Ackermann, Lighthouse Guild International

Vice Chair: Bernadette Kappen, New York Institute for Special Education

Secretary: John Mitchell, Cincinnati Association f/t Blind and Visually Impaired

Treasurer: Steve Pouliot, Vermont Association f/t Blind and Visually Impaired

Immediate Past Chair: Miki Jordan, Wayfinder Family Services

Michael Bina, Maryland School for the Blind

Lauren Branch, NewView Oklahoma

Roxann Mayros, VisionServe Alliance

Mike McGowan, NOAH

David Morgan, Future In Sight

Thomas Panek, Guiding Eyes for the Blind

Erika Petach, Blind and Vision Rehab Services of Pittsburgh


Shari Roeseler, Society for the Blind-Sacramento

Dennis Steiner, VisionCorps

Renee Vidrine, Lighthouse Louisiana

MEMBER AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The Braille Brilliance Program



The Lighthouse for the Blind in St. Louis started the Braille Brilliance program in 2015, which incorporates in-home braille tutoring, quarterly braille-related group events, and braille pen pals to boost braille skills and present braille in a fun context. The program has made a big impact around the state of Missouri for children who are braille readers.

In 2017, the Lighthouse held several braille events including a Braille Buddies Day where kids brought a print reading friend or sibling to learn more about braille through crafts and fun activities. There was a tour of a sculpture park where kids explored large and outdoor sculptures, small models of the sculptures and read braille descriptions (features previously



funded by The Lighthouse).

The kids had a braille scavenger hunt with braille clues and tactile maps at a

large mall, selecting a restaurant from a braille list and practicing folding their money. They also shopped with prize money awarded at the end of the day. "This was the best Saturday ever," said one child. At the State Park Hiking Day, the students also explored the Braille Trail.

The Lighthouse receives rave reviews about these activities from the kids participating, siblings, friends, and especially parents. Some kids come from over three hours away to connect with other braille readers. For more information about The Lighthouse's Braille Brilliance program contact John Thompson at jwthompson@lhbindustries.com or (314) 423-4333

VisionRefer! App Under Development

We are excited to announce that VisionServe Alliance has secured the support of the Gibney Family Foundation to develop a unique app in partnership with VisionServe member Lighthouse Works that will help make referrals of low vision patients by their doctors to vision rehabilitation centers (especially VisionServe Alliance members) nationwide as simple as clicking on an App. We are calling the app VisionRefer! and it will be made available to every

ophthalmologist in the country to make referrals to VisionServe members easy and efficient. We will provide you with more details and progress reports as we move forward.



Dear Members and Friends,

At the outset, please allow us to thank you for your continued commitment to VisionServe Alliance. This annual report provides highlights of our 2017 fiscal year, during which we celebrated our 30th year of incorporation, as well as an overview of our financial status. As a membership organization, it is important to reassure you of VisionServe Alliance's relevancy and our ongoing commitment to keep overhead low while increasing support to our members through individualized services, high level conferences, advanced collaborative networking opportunities, and national advocacy.

For those who went above and beyond with their support of the Alliance through your philanthropic backing of our 30th anniversary fund raising campaign or contributed to our annual appeal, we extend our deepest gratitude and applaud your extraordinary support of our mission.

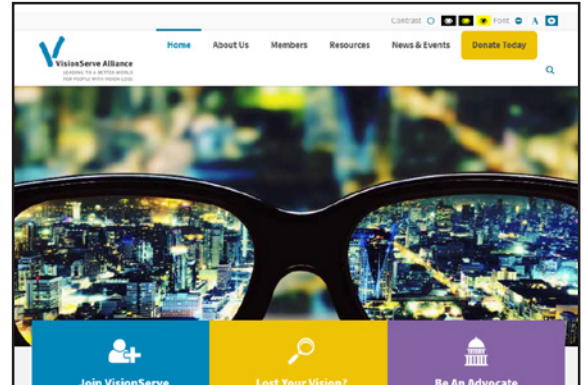
Thank you for wholeheartedly being a part of VisionServe Alliance. We look forward to much more in 2018!




14 corporate sponsors



7 Member Visits



New Website and membership management system



Served on 6 national committees/councils



National Advocacy on 5 Issues

- Created new membership categories open to nonprofits, for profits, students and retirees
- Provided consulting services to members.
- Published in JVIB

Thank you to our donors and supporters—your generosity in 2017 allowed us to strengthen our programs and better support our members. Thank you for supporting the mission of VisionServe Alliance.

**Personal Donors – General Fund
\$8,842**

Mark Ackermann
Al Avina
Mike Bina
Jeff Brasie
Pam Brandin
Ronald J. Cole
Elly Du Pre
Dave Ekin
Loretta Himmelsbach
Wells Jones
Mary Junnila
Bernadette Kappen
Becky Kirsch
David and Kimberly Leight
June Mansfield
Roxann Mayros
Mike and Sheri McGowan
Nancy Miller
John and Kathy Mitchell
Erika Petach
Steve Pouliot
Rachel Rosenbaum
Reinhard Mabry

**30/300/3000 Campaign Donors –
\$23,890 (including pledges)**

Mark Ackermann
Willa Adams
Mike Bina
Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services
of Pittsburgh
Braille Institute
Lauren Branch
Jeff Brasie
Dave Ekin
Envision Inc.
Doug Fowler
Kathryn Garre-Ayars
Kate Grathwol
Guide Dog Foundation
Billy Henry
Wendy Hymes
Denise Jess
Wells Jones
Miki Jordan

Bernadette Kappen
Lighthouse Guild
Lighthouse Louisiana
Lighthouse of Pinellas
David LoPresti
Mark Lucas
Roxann Mayros
Mike and Sheri McGowan
James Michaels
John and Kathy Mitchell
Lou Moneymaker
Libby Murphy
Lee Nasehi
Dan Needham
Diane Nelson
NewView Oklahoma
Thomas Panek
Sylvia Perez
Erika Petach
Courtney Plotner
Steve Pouliot
Bill Powell
San Antonio Lighthouse
Savannah Center for Blind and Low Vision
St. Louis Society for the Blind
Lou Tutt
Valley Center for the Blind
Vermont Association for the Blind & V.I.
Renee Vidrine
Ken Warkentin

Sustaining Donors - \$23,950

ABVI -Goodwill
Association for the Blind and Visually
Impaired
Blind and Vision Rehab Services
Braille Institute
Center for the Visually Impaired
Earle Baum
Enight Skills Center
Future In Sight
Junior Blind
Lighthouse Guild
Louisiana Association for the Blind
MAB Community Services
Metrolina Association for the Blind
New York Institutes for Special Education

Overbrook School for the Blind
St. Louis Lighthouse for the Blind
St. Louis Society for the Blind
The Carroll Center for the Blind
Vermont Association for the Blind and
Visually Impaired
VISIONS/Services for the Blind
Vista Center for the Blind

Conference Scholarship - \$3,750

ABVI-Goodwill
Braille Institute
Metrolina Association for the Blind
St. Louis Lighthouse for the Blind
Anonymous
Anonymous Employer Match

CORPORATE SPONSORS

CEO Summit

Junior Blind
Lewis Direct
Lighthouse Guild
NIB
OrCam
Robert Brinckerhoff/Morgan Stanley
Vanda

Executive Leadership Conference

Aira
Ai Squared/Freedom Scientific/Optelec
Bookshare
First Nonprofit Group
Humanware
Junior Blind
Lewis Direct
Lighthouse Guild
Mutual of America
NIB
OrCam
Robert Brinckerhoff/Morgan Stanley
Spark Therapeutics
Vanda

In-Kind Contributions

Lewis Direct
Lighthouse Louisiana
St. Louis Society for the Blind

By the Numbers

111 Members
13 New Members
97% Retention of members
44% New donors
17 of 19 Strategic goals
accomplished
160 Conference attendees

14 Sponsors
\$75,000 Sponsorships
5 National conferences
7 National presentations
7 Partnered research
projects
7 National Presentations

Financials

	2017	2016
Assets	\$515,223	\$506,870
Liabilities	\$208,991	\$234,150
Total Net Assets	\$207,136	\$146,033
Donor Restricted	\$21,528	\$22,573

CEO Summit 2018

April 29th to May 2nd
Tucson, Arizona



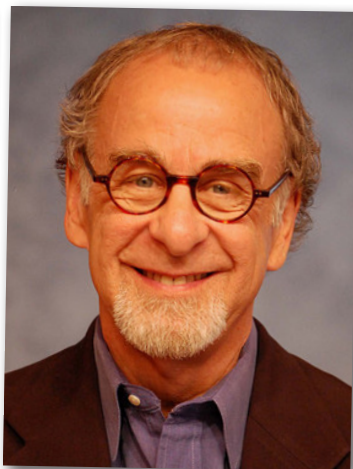
**Here are a few
reasons YOU
should attend:**

High level learning.

Impactful Networking



Jane Wei-Skillern



Doug Stevenson



Session on the New Tax Law



Activities to Refresh





Q & A Member Spotlight: Deborah Gold of Balance for Blind Adults First International Member

How did you learn about VisionServe Alliance?

I first heard from Lou Tutt when I served on AER's board. I also chatted with Joe Catavero, and Kathy Zeider encouraged me to think about joining.

What do you do in your down time?

I have been practicing yoga for about 9 years, love to hike and walk, sing in an 84-voice community choir, but my all-time favorite activity is cycling. I also love to read novels and watch all my series on Netflix!!

What are you reading, watching and/or listening to right now?

I'm reading Divisadero and about to start one that I think will be terrific called "Erotic Stories For Punjabi Widows: A Novel. I'm pretty keen on CBC radio (you guys in the States can find it on your NPR stations), and I really like Cuban music, and watching "Ozark" and "Grace and Frankie" on Netflix, This is Us, and Jane the Virgin.

What is your best guilty pleasure?

A good old-fashioned Ontario butter tart. Ever tried one? If not, get on up here and enjoy! YUM.

Tell us about one item on your bucket list?

Community theatre. My inner actress (undergrad degree in Drama) is still waiting for another chance to "tread the boards."

My best childhood memory is...

My dad, who was a Dickens Scholar, passed away on January 13, and the memories have been coming fast and furious in the past few weeks. When I was 11 my parents surprised us with a Dalmation named Pip to help with the adjustment of moving to Ontario.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Ha! Who knows? I didn't plan on being any of the things I've been since I started to work. In a fantasy world, where I could do it all over again, I'd be a stage actress full-time.

VisionServe Alliance CEO Summit

Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson, AZ | April 29-May 2, 2018



VisionServe Alliance Executive Leadership Conference

Portland, OR | October 28 – 31, 2018



- MISSION:** To engage leaders in building a better world through services for people with vision loss.
- VISION:** To be a leader and a unified voice in the field of services for people with vision loss for advocacy, education, ethical management, professional growth, and enhanced services.
- PURPOSE:** To build and nurture a diverse core of future and current leaders within a healthy and vibrant network of private nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and Canada whose commitment is to enrich the lives of those living with vision loss and to remove the barriers to the pursuit of opportunities.



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