



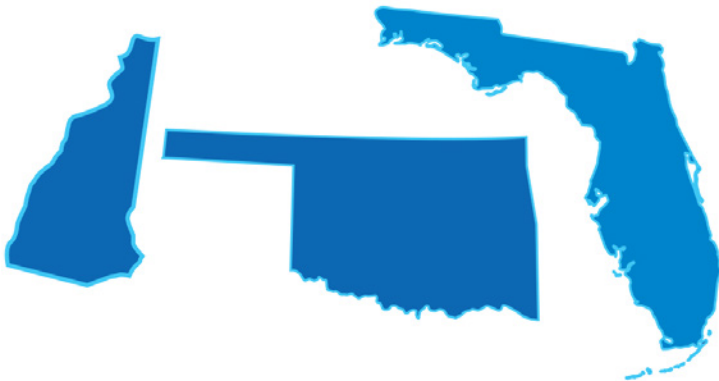
# LINKS

Learning • Innovation • Networking • Knowledge • Sharing

## VisionRefer! Pilot Program Launched in Florida, Oklahoma and New Hampshire



VisionRefer!



Florida Agencies Serving the Blind (Florida ASB) has taken the lead in organizing and funding a twelve-month pilot program of VisionRefer! – VisionServe’s web-based patient referral system—to introduce VisionRefer! to ophthalmologists in Florida. Referrals are already successfully being received, beginning with an initial referral made by an ophthalmologist and sent to the Manasota Lighthouse on January 11, 2019.

“VisionRefer! is a 21st-century solution that will allow physicians to easily and quickly refer patients of all ages for vision rehabilitation

services,” notes Roxann Mayros, outgoing President of VisionServe Alliance who came up with the idea of VisionRefer! “I am excited to see the pilot project already generating referrals, just like we knew it would.”

Florida ASB and 17 other Florida VisionServe member agencies received funding support for the pilot project from Florida Division of Blind Services to create marketing materials such as a tear-off flyer, and print ads. Additional marketing support is being provided by the Florida Society of Ophthalmologists and their partner, Eschenbach Optics, who will begin traveling statewide introducing VisionRefer! to ophthalmologists.

“We hope that this pilot project will share the benefits of vision rehabilitation services to patients and their practices and dispel myths about our professions and fears that patients will be diverted from their care,” says Dr. Elly du Pre, Executive Director of Florida ASB. “Our goal is to make adoption of VisionRefer! easy by helping them put VisionRefer! on their desktops and provide handouts to give to their patients.”

The VisionRefer! pilot project will also launch in March at NewView Oklahoma and Future In Sight in New Hampshire to test the efficacy and impact of state-wide single provider systems. It is projected that a nation-wide roll out will begin in late summer.

# Chairman's Message

*John Mitchell, President & CEO, Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

I hope each of you are enjoying the New Year with the optimism, hope and renewal it brings to each of us. I look forward to serving you as your new VisionServe Alliance Board Chair and continue the positive progress and growth that was achieved in 2018. Needless to say, I am honored to serve in this capacity and will do everything I can to lead VSA, with my fellow Board members, to embrace the great opportunities that we have available to us.



This is a very exciting time for VisionServe with Roxann Mayros retiring and transitioning her role of 13 years as President and CEO to Lee Nasehi on March 1. Roxann has been diligent in ensuring a smooth transition and passing of the baton to Lee. 2019 will also be a year of growing our partnership with Prevent Blindness to improve and expand VisionServe's public awareness, our presence on Capitol Hill and work in the Public Policy arena. All of these efforts are in line with our Mission of "Engaging leaders in building a better world through services for people with vision loss." We are looking forward to continuing our work to bring value and support to the important work and missions of each of your organizations.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have questions or ideas. My email address is [john.mitchell@cincyblind.org](mailto:john.mitchell@cincyblind.org). I look forward to seeing all of you in Nashville, Tennessee at our CEO Summit, May 5-8th.



# CEO Corner

*Roxann Mayros, VisionServe Alliance, St. Louis, MO*

Twenty-five years ago, I spent my work day designing marketing information systems for Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. and Fortune 100 in Europe. Each day I wished that my work made a real difference. Helen Keller said, "Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."



In 1993 I received a call asking me to "take a look" at a small agency serving the blind. Their Board was considering closing it due to mismanagement and a flood that had destroyed everything but the shell of the building. I jumped at the chance even though I knew nothing about nonprofits and even less about blindness.

Now that I am retiring 26 years later, I have had the most fulfilling of careers. I have met amazing people, seen extraordinary generosity, watched inexperienced leaders become national leaders, made lifelong friends, and been a part of growing VisionServe into a national collaborative network like none other inside or outside of our field.

I thank each of you for your professional and personal friendship, for providing your support, teaching me everything I know, and for allowing me to have "the best job in the field!" Please stay in touch – [roxannmayros@gmail.com](mailto:roxannmayros@gmail.com) or 727-505-5801.



## 2019 Board of Directors

**Chair:** John Mitchell, Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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

**Secretary:** Mike McGowan, NOAH

**Treasurer:** Lauren Branch, NewView Oklahoma

**Immediate Past Chair:** Miki Jordan, Wayfinder Family Services

**Joe Bogart**, Blinded Veterans Association

**Lee Nasehi**, VisionServe Alliance

**David Morgan**, Future In Sight

**Libby Murphy**, Louisiana Association for the Blind

**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

**Ken Warkentin**, Valley Center for the Blind

**Welcome to our new Board Members Joe Bogart, Libby Murphy and Ken Warkentin.**

**Many thanks to outgoing Board Members Mark Ackermann, Mike Bina, & Steve Pouliot**

# MEMBER FOCUS

## APH and Lighthouse Central Florida Team Up On New Program

We love to see two of our members collaborating! While in Orlando to launch a new product at ATIA, APH (Craig Meador) partnered with Lighthouse Central Florida

(Lee Nasehi now Kyle Johnson) to field test their new device called "Code Jumper"



with students enrolled in Lighthouse's after school program. Code Jumper is a powerful equalizer that teaches blind and low vision kids how to "code." Great for school-age and transition programs. Want to learn more? Check out [www.codejumper.com](http://www.codejumper.com) and sign up for the waiting list!

## \$5,000 in Tech Grants Awarded to Member Agencies

The following member agencies were awarded Tech Grants through the Inspiration Foundation to support technical development:

- The Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind in New Port Richey (FL) was awarded \$1,500 to fund the purchase of a tablet and software (JAWS & Zoom text).
- New Vision for Independence in Leesburg (FL) was awarded \$1,500 to fund the purchase of a desktop, laptop and software (JAWS, Zoom text and VictorReader Trek)
- VisionServe Alliance, \$1,500 for a new laptop.



The Tech Grants from the Inspiration Foundation are life savers to our members who often struggle to afford updating their technology. We truly appreciate your support.

## VisionServe Academic Scholarship Awarded to David Sterne of Visually Impaired Preschool Services

David Stern, the lead Blind/Low Vision Specialist at VIPS in Kentucky has been awarded a \$1,500 academic scholarship from VisionServe Alliance to go towards his Blindness and Low Vision Certification. We are especially happy to support David's commitment to our littlest ones with vision loss. Congratulations, and thank you again for choosing this field for your life's passion. It is our pleasure to support the future of our field.



*Diane Nelson, Executive Director and David Sterne,*





**VisionServe Alliance**

# 2018 Impact Report

## – Year in Highlights



**Record number of conference attendees, including 4 scholarship recipients.** *“I so greatly appreciate that you selected me to receive a scholarship for the conference, as our agency would not have been able to support my attendance without it. The opportunity for education and connection building at VisionServe is invaluable and I am so grateful to have been a part of it.”* – Shellena Heber, scholarship recipient

What an incredible year. VisionServe Alliance’s first professional leader, Roxann Mayros, announced her retirement when the year began, and by year-end, Lee Nasehi had been chosen as our second professional leader.

And in between, we continued our daily mission to support and inform member organizations, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Prevent Blindness that will create new opportunities and national awareness of our field, produced two highly attended and rated national meetings, and launched a new web-based patient referral system called VisionRefer!.

We firmly believe the impact of our organization comes not from what we accomplish, but from the passion of the people who believe in our mission—our members and supporters. Thank you for believing in VisionServe Alliance!

**VisionRefer! Pilot Program begun in October by Florida ASB & 17 Florida agencies**



**National policy work in Washington D.C.** *Pennsylvania members met with Senator Casey’s staff to discuss a comprehensive vision bill.*



**Strong partnerships and friendships.** *“Thank you so much for the amazingly wonderful conference! I think it’s the best I can remember in 20+ years of attending them.”* – Pam Brandin



**Lee Nasehi hired as Roxann retires.** *“There is tremendous need across this country and I know that together we are going to make a difference.”* – Lee Nasehi

**Thank you to our donors and supporters—your generosity in 2018 allowed us to strengthen our programs and better support our members. Thank you for supporting the mission of VisionServe Alliance.**

**Personal Donors - General Fund  
\$12,125**

Mark Ackermann  
Lauren Branch  
Pam Brandin  
Jeff Brasie  
Ronald Cole  
Mary Junnila  
Bernadette Kappen  
Roxann Mayros  
Mike McGowan  
Gerald & Nancy Miller  
Thomas H. Miller  
John & Kathy Mitchell  
David Morgan  
Lee Nasehi  
Erika Petach  
Steve Pouliot & Fiomena Rego  
Shari Roeseler  
Kenneth Rosenthal  
Dennis Steiner

**30/300/3000 Campaign Donors  
\$11,447**

Mark Ackermann  
Envision Inc.  
Billy Henry  
Denise Jess  
Miki Jordan  
Lighthouse Guild  
Dan Needham  
Diane Nelson  
NewView Oklahoma  
Savannah Center for B & L.V.  
Vermont Assoc. f/t Blind & V.I.

**Sustaining Donors - \$21,180**

ABVI - Goodwill  
ABVI - Grand Rapids, MI  
Blind & Vision Rehab Srvs of Pittsburgh  
Braille Institute of America  
Center f/t Visually Impaired - Atlanta  
Earle Baum Center for the Blind  
Ensign Skills Center  
Future In Sight  
Lighthouse for the Blind – St. Louis  
Lighthouse Guild  
Lighthouse Louisiana

Louisiana Association for the Blind  
MAB Community Services  
Metrolina Association for the Blind  
NY Institute for Special Education  
St. Louis Society for the Blind  
The Blind & Visually Impaired Center-  
Monterey  
The Carroll Center for the Blind  
U.S. Association for Blind Athletes  
Vermont Association for the Blind  
VISIONS/Services for the Blind  
Vista Center for the Blind & V.I.

**Power of R Campaign - \$5,950**

ABVI - Grand Rapids  
Blind & Vision Rehab Srvs of Pittsburgh  
Bosma Industries f/t Blind  
Pam Brandin  
Florida ASB  
Bernadette Kappen  
Lighthouse for the Blind – St. Louis  
Lauren Mayros  
Toni Mayros Barkdoll  
Mike McGowan  
Lee Nasehi  
Erika Petach  
Prevent Blindness  
San Antonio LH  
Society f/t Blind Sacramento  
Tampa LH f/t Blind  
Lou Tutt  
VIPS  
Brenda Wendling

**Conference Scholarship - \$1,380**

ABVI - Goodwill  
Anonymous  
Braille Institute of America  
Jeff Brasie  
James Dismas  
Earle Baum Center for the Blind  
Renee Fleury Harris  
Billy Henry  
Lighthouse for the Blind – St. Louis  
Mark Lucas  
MAB Community Services  
Jim and Cheryl Mayros  
Metrolina Association for the Blind

Mutual of America  
Barbara Niedland McCarthy  
Anat Nulman  
Lynne Zaveda O'Brien  
Karen Ross  
Debbie Sloan

**CORPORATE SPONSORS**

**CEO Summit**

ACVREP  
Aira  
Blindfold Games  
Bookshare  
Lewis Direct  
Lighthouse Guild  
NIB  
OrCam  
Robert Brinckerhoff/Morgan Stanley  
U.S. Trust  
Vanda Pharmaceuticals

**Executive Leadership Conference**

Aira  
AFB  
APH  
Blind & Vision Rehab Srvs of Pittsburgh  
Bosma Industries f/t Blind  
First Nonprofit Group  
Lewis Direct  
Lighthouse Guild  
Mutual of America  
NIB  
NewView Oklahoma  
Optelec  
OrCam  
Robert Brinckerhoff/Morgan Stanley  
San Antonio Lighthouse  
The Generational Institute  
US Trust  
Vanda Pharmaceuticals  
Wayfinder Family Services

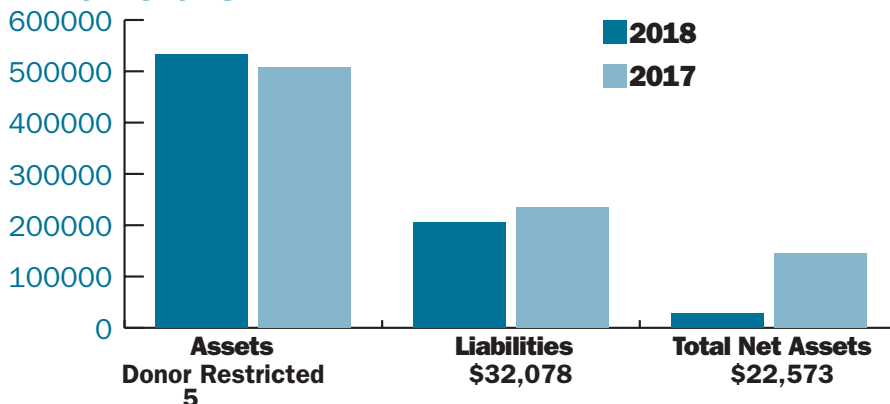
**In-Kind Contributions**

Lewis Direct  
Northwest Assoc. for Blind Athletes  
St. Louis Society f/t Blind & V.I.

**By the Numbers**

**116** Members  
**8** New Members  
**98%** Retention of members  
**21** Sponsors  
**20** Strategic goals accomplished  
**181** Conference attendees  
**7** National conferences Attended

**Financials**







# VISIONSERVE ALLIANCE 4TH ANNUAL CEO SUMMIT

**May 5 – 8, Nashville, Tennessee**

**VisionServe Alliance hosts our 4th Annual CEO Summit, “Growing Impact,” this May at the Cambria Downtown Hotel in Nashville, TN**

Attendance is open to CEOs/EDs of our member organizations and is your chance to take a deep dive into two timely topics with nationally-known speakers: Day 1: Back by popular demand is Lily Trager with Morgan Stanley on Impact Investing for Nonprofits. Day 2: Contracts and Compensation–All You Need to Know with Tom MacMurray of Mutual of America and Jason Taylor of the Krizner Group. Just added! Pre-conference presentation Sunday on Board Engagement with Diane Chipps Bailey, Managing Director & National Practice Executive with US Trust.

You’ll also meet VisionServe’s new leader, Lee Nasehi, for a “CEO Chat,” an opportunity to share with her your desires for VisionServe’s future.

Each afternoon will feature facilitated networking activities which will provide opportunities for you to connect one-on-one with leaders from across the country. The Summit ends with our ever-popular Spiel and Steal session, where you can share a winning strategy, pose your biggest challenge, and learn from your peers.

Hope to see you there! Last date to register at the standard rate is: **Thursday, April 4th!**



**Lily Trager**



**Tom MacMurray**



**Diane Chipps Bailey**



**Jason Taylor**

**Kelly Harris, President/CEO of Conklin Center  
for the Blind in Daytona Beach, Florida**  
[www.conklincenter.org](http://www.conklincenter.org)

**What is your best  
childhood memory?**

*Learning to ride horses  
Western style – cowboy hat,  
cowboy boots and all! I ended  
up going to “Camp Lonestar”  
in LaGrange Texas and came  
to love barrel racing!*

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

*I listen to music to escape  
and read to learn. I’m  
currently reading “Social Value  
Investing” by Howard Buffett,  
providing a management  
framework for developing  
and measuring  
partnerships.*

**Tell us about  
one item on your  
bucket list.**

*That’s easy – and it’s  
right here in my back  
door. I want to go to  
the Daytona 500 –  
“when in Rome!”*

**What do you do in  
your down time?**

*My church community has  
always been prominent. I  
also attend concerts by  
my son who is a talented  
classical musician. He’s  
currently in Europe studying,  
so now I have to seek  
out my own source of  
entertainment!*

**What is your  
best guilty pleasure?**

*Going out to restaurants  
with good company for a  
nice meal, red wine, and  
laughter! I’d be out to  
dinner every night if  
I could!*

**As a new leader,  
what are you most  
impressed by at  
your agency?**

*I was struck by the number  
of staff who have made  
working at the Conklin  
Center their life-long  
career. Many have worked  
upward to 25 years.*

**Tell us what you value  
about your membership  
in VisionServe?**

*Because of my congenital  
glaucoma diagnosed at 5 months  
old, I’ve had some experience in  
the blindness community but not  
professionally. Attending my first  
VisionServe conference just 30  
days into the job allowed me  
to make new friendships that  
offered practical guidance  
and a network of professionals  
and services that  
I lean on daily.*



## 2019 CEO Summit, Nashville, TN | May 5 - 8



## 2019 Fall Executive Leadership Conference Atlanta, GA | November 3 - 6



- 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.



8760 Manchester Rd, St. Louis, MO 63144  
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