

LINKS

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Opening Space for the Future of VisionServe Alliance



VisionServe Alliance is recasting itself through a number of important strategic planning activities. The first initiative following the hiring of a new CEO was soliciting input from the Board of Directors and other members to hear their vision for the future (as well as their needs/desires) of VisionServe Alliance. A membership survey and phone interviews were conducted and input solicited during the CEO Summit.

Next came the important decision to implement Traction/EOS at VisionServe Alliance and develop its Vision/Traction Organizer (2-page strategic plan) following the CEO Summit in May in Nashville, incorporating member input. That planning session was extremely productive and with the expert assistance of EOS Implementor, Chris White, VSA has a draft of that document which will be shared with the full membership very soon. EOS tools will help strengthen VSA's impact and sustainability in significant ways over the next decade.

The third vehicle being employed in the redirection of VSA's future is another big decision on the part of the Board of Directors and staff: VisionServe's Fall Executive Leadership Conference in Atlanta will use the Open Space Technology meeting format. This format is quite different than our typical conferences and will be open to stakeholders beyond VSA members in order to create a national dialogue about the future of the field's collective work.

Open Space Technology (OST) is a method for organizing a meeting. Participants are invited in order to focus on a specific, important task or purpose. It is participant-driven and the agenda is created by the people attending. At the end of the meeting, a document is created summarizing the work of the group and shared with all. OST is based upon the work of Harrison Owen beginning in the 1980's.

Please read more about OST at:

www.openspaceworld.org

VisionServe Alliance is opening space to consider the future of services, products and opportunities for people with blindness and low vision of all ages. It is hoped that all members and many others will want to be part of this very important discussion. There will be time to talk about what matters most to everyone, as well as to develop, maintain, or renew relationships with other leaders and just have fun. Everyone needs time to replenish their professional wellsprings and strengthen their networks of colleagues, partners and collaborators. November 3 – 6 in Atlanta will be the place to do that.

Chairman's Message

John Mitchell, President/CEO of Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

What a great CEO Summit we had in Nashville—excellent presentations, networking and fun! Congratulations to Lee Nasehi, Wendy Hymes and Ben Leigh, our stellar team, on a well-executed Summit. A quick overview of the VisionServe activities that occurred in Nashville:



- Our Board met on May 5th. 2020 conference dates and locations were determined. The Board agreed to pursue the use of Open Space Technology (OST) for our fall conference in Atlanta, suggested by Board member David Morgan of Future in Sight. I'm excited about this highly interactive approach to finding solutions.
- We heard excellent presentations on board governance, impact investing, executive contracts and deferred compensation, and the latest trends in technology from our corporate partners.
- Thank you to our Board who stayed an additional day and a half for strategic planning to implement **Traction – Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS)** for the operations of VisionServe Alliance. I am excited that this will improve VisionServe and that this system will also be made available to VisionServe members.

I'm pleased to share that with Lee as our new leader, VisionServe is making needed changes to the way it operates and supports you, our members, and I see a brighter future for our field. I look forward to seeing you all in Atlanta!



CEO Corner

Lee Nasehi, President/CEO of VisionServe Alliance

Hello Friends – I am closing in on my 90th day on the job. I'd like to know how you think I am doing. We are seeking to create a culture of feedback throughout VisionServe Alliance. If you attended the CEO Summit in Nashville, I hope you perceived that. Please let us know. . .



I am happy with what has been accomplished in my first 90 days, but even more excited about the next 90. Speaking of “90,” a big part of what I am doing now has to do with the implementation of Traction/EOS at VisionServe Alliance. This is a practical method for VisionServe to strengthen the six key components of our business (vision, people, data, issues, process and traction) and give us more focus, growth and capacity to serve our members. Implementing this at my former place of employment, Lighthouse Central Florida/Lighthouse Works, changed my professional capacity and the trajectory of the organization. I believe in its ability to do the same for VisionServe Alliance.

So, what has that to do with “90”? One of the structures of Traction/EOS is focusing our work within 90-day chunks or quarters. The VisionServe Alliance Board of Directors is organizing its committee work within the same structure. I am excited to see VisionServe looking for new avenues to enhance its ability to help its members grow their collective impact for the benefit of people with blindness and low vision.



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

TechLive Strategic Focus Groups Premiere at Nashville CEO Summit

During this year's CEO Summit in Nashville, representatives from Aira, OrCam, Vispero and VisionRefer got the chance to talk with attendees to address the latest technology issues & trends facing our member agencies in a session titled, **TechLive! Strategic Focus Groups**. This speed-dating styled event allowed for open discussion between member organizations and tech vendors giving members the opportunity to share their needs as organizations offering assistive technology as well as their clients' needs in the field. Tech vendors were able to ask questions and present technological solutions to issues and ideas raised. These discussions brought about excitement for implementing new technology and new partnerships with our tech vendors.



Bill Killroy talks about the latest developments from Vispero.

VisionServe Alliance's own Ben Leigh, administrator for the VisionRefer web-based patient-referral system, shared details about this exciting new member benefit and updates on its progress during the pilot year. Being in small groups gave members the opportunity to interact with the VisionRefer website interface and ask questions about how they could implement it in their own organizations.

"Being able to talk directly to our members that are or will soon be using VisionRefer and to walk them through the referral process was very insightful for how VisionRefer



Ben Leigh demonstrates VisionRefer with his group.

will increase patient referrals to their agencies," noted Ben Leigh. "Members were able to easily use the website and become comfortable and excited about using VisionRefer as we onboard more agencies throughout this summer and fall."



Anat Nulman demonstrates the OrCam MyEye 2.0.

VisionRefer is VisionServe's new web-based patient referral system which makes it easy for eye doctors to refer their patients to vision rehabilitation agencies. VisionRefer is currently being tested in California, Florida, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Vermont, and is projected to launch nationwide by late 2019. For more information, visit the system website at www.VisionRefer.com from any web browser.

OrCam representatives Gill Beerli, Anat Nulman and Motti Attia were on hand demonstrating their newest device, the MyEye 2.0, the most advanced artificial vision device that empowers people who are blind, visually impaired or have reading difficulties and supports the work that members do. This incredibly light-weight, tiny-mighty device clips on a temple of glasses and reads any printed text, recognizes people, identifies products and much more.

Paul Schroeder with Aira also participated. "Aira provides access to visual information through a cellphone and streaming video, connecting individuals who are blind or low vision with a highly-trained and paid Aira agent. Along with streaming video, Aira leverages tools like GPS and integration with rideshare apps to provide support for all manner of activities where vision is helpful, anywhere anytime." Paul encourages VisionServe member agencies to contact Aira to take advantage of their employment program, to help bring Aira Access to their communities or obtain their Horizon hardware for client training.

FUN in Music City at the 4th Annual VisionServe Alliance CEO Summit



This year's CEO Summit drew a record attendance by 51 member CEO's. With the theme of "Growing Impact," attendees had learning sessions on impact investing, board engagement, executive contracts, deferred compensation, and cutting-edge technical developments in our field.



During 3+ days together, we had networking opportunities a plenty, along with time to rejuvenate and return home ready to get back to work armed with expanded knowledge, fresh ideas and new collaborative relationships. Here's a snapshot of Summit activities:



Erika Petach and baby Brianna



Paul Schroeder of Aira explores a bronze statue outside of the historic Ryman Auditorium



Dianne Chipps Bailey (Bank of America) spoke on Board Engagement Sunday, pictured with John Mitchell (Board Chair), Lee Nasehi (President/CEO) and Joe Danowsky (US Trust/Bank of America)



The food tour was a huge hit!



Soon to be retired CEO of Bosma Enterprises, Lou Moneymaker and friends

Log into the member portal at visionservealliance.org/login/ for speaker videos, handouts and more!



Our panelists for a discussion on Executive contracts and deferred compensation were (L-R) Miki Jordan (Wayfinder Family Services), Kim Galban-Countryman (Lighthouse o/t Big Bend), Tom MacMurray (Mutual of America) and Jason Taylor (Krizner Group)



Hit singer/songwriter Dave Pahanish gave a special performance for us



VisionServe's Board completed two strategic planning sessions



Three of our Florida member CEO's: Kelly Harris, Kim Galban-Countryman and Anissa Pieriboni



Great to have our two international members at the Summit - Michael Leventhal (Israel Guide Dog Center) and Deborah Gold (Balance for Blind Adults)



Two members received scholarships to attend the Summit: Toni Walls (Cabell-Wayne Assoc. of the Blind) and Elly du Pre (Florida ASB) "I am so thankful to have received the scholarship to attend the 2019 CEO Summit. As a recently named Director, the networking alone was so very valuable. I am forever changed by the contacts gained and the experiences shared with this amazing group of people." – Toni Walls

MEMBER FOCUS

Visionary Leaders Honored at Nashville CEO Summit

At our final evening event at the CEO Summit, VisionServe honored three members in attendance who will retire this summer. Here's more about the impact they have had in our field:



Rudy with Sharon Giovinazzo, Lauren Branch, John Mitchell, and Lee Nasehi

Rudi D'Amico – Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI)

President and CEO of CABVI, Rudy D'Amico, plans to retire at the end of August 2019. Rudy was a successful entrepreneur and tireless advocate in our field. He served on CABVI's board of directors from 1995 until his employment at the agency in 2003 as VP of Operations. Some of the exciting developments he has overseen include expanding employment services into nearby Onondaga County, NY; adding over 100 employees, bringing total employment to 270, half of whom are blind; opening four Base Supply Centers on military bases in northeastern states; and overseeing the addition of innovative vision rehabilitation services.



David Ekin – St. Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired



If not for David, VisionServe wouldn't be what it is today. David served on the VisionServe board from 1998 – 2008 (serving as chair 2001 – 2004), and shepherded a strategic planning process that was inclusive of every

single member. So much so, that when he asked for a \$1,000 donation to hire NCPABVI's first Executive Director, 39 members of 58 contributed, and some are still contributing today, 14 years later. David also made our first professional office possible by offering free office space, furniture, phone, computer, copier, fax, etc., and time from his admin, technology and bookkeeping staff. VisionServe is who we are today because of David Ekin.



David Ekin with Board Chair John Mitchell, and President/CEO Lee Nasehi

David was also the Treasurer of AER, and in that role, negotiated with AFB to provide JVIB as a benefit to AER members. He was also the founder of ACVREP. As an AER board member, he insisted that the field needed to become more professional and the certification process needed to be professionalized with a strong knowledge-based test and made independent from AER.

Today's VisionServe Alliance owes a lot to David for his thoughtful leadership. Thank you David!

Lou Moneymaker – Bosma Enterprises



Lou Moneymaker pictured with Dennis Steiner, John Mitchell and Lee Nasehi

Lou Moneymaker, President of Bosma Enterprises since 2001, plans to retire this July. During his time leading Bosma, the organization's annual revenue has grown from \$2 million to \$70 million. Lou has dedicated his life to service, working to create equal opportunities and independence for people who are blind or visually impaired for the last 50 years. Before joining Bosma, Lou spent 32 years with the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, serving in various roles, including teacher, coach, assistant principal and dean of students. He also helped establish the United States Association of Blind Athletes in the 1970s.



**Member Spotlight – Joe Bogart,
President of Blinded Veterans Association,
Alexandria, VA**



**What is your best
childhood memory?**

For one summer I'd stay every weekend with my grandpa and we'd go fishing in his boat or sitting on his dock.

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

H3 Leadership: Hungry Humble & Hustle; The Death Cure and whatever seems to sound interesting on Netflix or Amazon Prime.

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

Go to a Super Bowl that the Chicago Bears are playing and they win. And successfully hunt big game animals in the US.

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

Run while thinking about work, sleep and dream about work, watch movies and try to not think about work, read and pause to think about work or just think about work. Oh, I also like to cook.

**What is your
best guilty pleasure?**

I'm not sure I feel guilty about anything I enjoy. I like good food, good comedy and yes, as a guy, I'm secure enough that I have a favorite Madonna song.

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

I'm truly in awe about our members' patriotism and dedication to serving fellow blinded veterans.

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

I truly value the networking opportunities, the peer mentoring that occurs at the conferences and the ability to be a positive influence and continue serving others. And I've found quite a few new friendships with fellow VisionServe members.

FUTURE CONFERENCES – SAVE THE DATES!

31st Annual Executive Leadership Conference | Atlanta, GA
Nov. 3 – 6, 2019 | Venue: The Georgian Terrace Hotel



5th Annual CEO Summit | Albuquerque, NM | April 26 – 29, 2020
Venue: Hotel Chaco



**JUST
ANNOUNCED!**

31st Annual Executive Leadership Conference | Tampa, FL
Nov. 1 – 4, 2020 | Venue: Westin Tampa Waterside Hotel



**JUST
ANNOUNCED!**

For conference details, visit our conference page online:

www.visionservealliance.org/conferences/



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