High Tech For People With Low Vision: Adaptive Technologies – Access For All

Open yourself up to current and future technology trends for people with vision impairment. Meet Patrick Timony, nationally recognized leader in Adaptive Technology, on Sunday, April 14th at 2 p.m. at the Sibley Medical Building.

Adaptive Technologies (AT) are devices that allow people with vision impairment and other disabilities to access information, engage with society and be independent. The DC Public Library provides these technologies, so that everyone in the community has equal access to programs and services.

Patrick Timony is the Adaptive Technology Librarian in the Adaptive Services Division of the DC Public Library. He maintains a comprehensive knowledge (see Adaptive Technologies page 4)

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Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington®
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The nearly 100 attendees, at the March 10 Macular Degeneration meeting at Sibley that featured Dr. Suleiman Alibhai, clearly indicated that they want to learn about and be referred for Low Vision Rehabilitation from their treating ophthalmologist or optometrist.

This sentiment is echoed by thousands of people with low vision around the nation. Thanks to Dr. Alibhai and his colleagues for the services they provide in the DC metro area – other parts of the country are not as fortunate as this area. Dr. Alibhai presented a historical perspective on how services for those who are vision impaired have evolved and encouragement on what the future may hold. “Talk to your eye doctors,” says Janet Morrison, Program Director of the Macular Degeneration Network. “Help low vision rehabilitation become as comfortable for them to refer us to as physical or occupational rehabilitation has become for other medical specialists.” “Referral to low vision rehabilitation is particularly important,” urged Dr. Alibhai, “as the baby boomers age and the number of vision impaired people over 65 will more than double by the year 2030, according to statistics provided by the National Eye Institute.”

Call POB at 202-234-1010 for information on its Low Vision Learning Center or visit www.youreyes.org.
An international group of researchers has discovered seven new regions of the human genome called “loci,” that are associated with increased risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness. The AMD Gene Consortium, a network of international investigators representing 18 research groups, also confirmed 12 loci identified in previous studies. The findings are reported online in the journal Nature Genetics. Supported by the National Eye Institute (NEI), a part of the National Institutes of Health, the study represents the most comprehensive genome-wide analysis of genetic variations associated with AMD.

“This compelling analysis by the AMD Gene Consortium demonstrates the enormous value of effective collaboration,” said NEI Director Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D. “Combining data from multiple studies, this international effort provides insight into the molecular basis of AMD, which will help researchers search for causes of the disease and will inform future development of new diagnostic and treatment strategies.”

Scientists have shown that age, diet, and smoking influence a person’s risk of developing AMD. Genetics also plays a strong role. AMD often runs in families and is more common among certain ethnicities, such as Asians and people of European descent.

Since the 2005 discovery that certain variations in the gene for complement factor H “a component of the immune system” are associated with major risk for AMD, research groups around the world have conducted genome-wide association
studies to identify other loci that affect AMD risk. These studies were made possible by tools developed through the Human Genome Project, which mapped human genes, and related projects, such the International HapMap Project, which identified common patterns of genetic variation within the human genome.

The AMD Gene Consortium combined data from 18 research groups to increase the power of prior analyses. The current analysis identified seven new loci near genes. As with the previously discovered 12 loci, these seven loci are scattered throughout the genome on many different chromosomes.

The consortium’s analysis included data from more than 17,100 people with the most advanced and severe forms of AMD, which were compared to data from more than 60,000 people without AMD. The 19 loci that were found to be associated with AMD implicate a variety of biological functions, including regulation of the immune system, maintenance of cellular structure, growth and permeability of blood vessels, lipid metabolism, and atherosclerosis.

For further research information, visit www.nei.nih.gov or phone the NEI Information Office at 301-496-5248.

(Adaptive Technologies continued from page 1)

of trends in the field of Adaptive Technology (AT), conducts AT training for customers and staff, and coordinates customer and professional networking programs. Patrick earned his Masters in Library and Information Sciences at Catholic University, and has worked at the Library of Congress and the MIT Media Lab. See the Calendar of Events on Page 6 for more details.
Calendar of Events

• Tuesday, April 9
Low Vision Lunch & Learn, “Dry Eye: Finding Relief,” 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Lorena LoVerde, M.D., MedStar Washington Hospital Center Eye Clinic, 110 Irving Street, NW, Washington, DC (Bus Circle Entrance) Complimentary Lunch – Call to register: 202-877-5329.

• Wednesday, April 10
Low Vision Independence Through Arts & Culture, Lunch & Learn, Guest Speaker: Serena McGuire, MLS, Reader’s Advisor, Adaptive Services, DC Public Library, “Learn New Ways of Reading With Your Ears,” 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, Adaptive Services Division, Room 215, 901 G Street, NW, Washington, DC. Call to reserve lunch: 202-727-2142.

• Thursday, April 11
Sunday April 14
“High Tech for Low Vision,” Macular Degeneration Network. Meet Patrick Timony, MLS, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, a pioneer in learning strategies for teaching technology to those with vision loss and other deficits. 2 - 3:30 p.m., Sibley Medical Building, 5215 Loughboro Road, NW, Washington, DC. Free garage parking adjacent to Medical Building. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 202-234-1010.

Wednesday, April 17
Low Vision Group, “Sharing Solutions,” EVERYONE welcome, 10:30 a.m., Vinson Hall, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA. For more information, call 202-234-1010.

Thursday, April 18

Wednesday, April 24
“PICTURE THIS: Described Art Tour,” 1 p.m., National Gallery of Art, West Building. Meet at second floor Rotunda, 6th & Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. For more information, call 202-737-4215.
MAY UPCOMING EVENTS — SAVE THE DATE!

May is Older Americans Month

- May 8: Low Vision Independence Through Arts & Culture, 11 a.m., Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library, Room 215, Washington, DC.

- May 9: Low Vision Tea & Conversation, 1:30 p.m., Charles Beatley Library, Alexandria, VA.

- May 14: Low Vision Lunch & Learn, 11 a.m., MedStar Washington Hospital Center Eye Clinic, Washington, DC.

- May 15: Low Vision Group, 10:30 a.m., Vinson Hall, McLean, VA.

- May 16: Vision Support Lunch & Learn, 12:30 p.m., Friendship Heights Village Center, Chevy Chase, MD.

- May 22: “Picture This,” 1 p.m., National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

LOW VISION TIP:

Don’t throw away caps to old Sharpie or 20/20 pens. Keep them in the event you lose a cap to a new one!

Tip submitted by a Your Eyes Today reader.
Visit POB’s website, www.youreyes.org, to stay up-to-date on news and event information.