



Your Eyes



FEBRUARY 2025

TODAY

February is Low Vision Awareness Month

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, a time to recognize the 50 million Americans with visual impairments, including nearly 20,000 in our region. These conditions can make everyday tasks like reading, cooking, or navigating difficult, and they cannot be fixed with glasses, contacts, or other standard treatments such as medicine or surgery.

This month, the National Eye Institute (NEI) emphasizes the importance of vision rehabilitation, which helps individuals with visual impairments maximize their remaining vision and maintain independence.

A vision rehabilitation examination differs from a typical eye exam with a regular ophthalmologist or optometrist. While these doctors focus on the structures of the eyes to manage eye conditions or diseases, vision rehabilitation focuses on the function of the eyes and how the condition(s) impacts daily life.

(Continued on page 2)

**Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington®
415 2nd Street NE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20002**

(202) 234-1010 | youreyes.org | Facebook & Instagram: @youreyesdc

February is Low Vision Awareness Month

(Continued from page 1)

People with conditions like macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, or glaucoma work with low-vision specialists during vision rehabilitation. This process typically includes a comprehensive vision exam, a personalized rehabilitation plan, evaluation of non-optical, optical, and electronic visual aids, and referrals to other helpful resources and services.

Vision rehabilitation complements, rather than replaces, medical treatment. It focuses on adapting to vision loss while ensuring clients continue care from their eye doctors.

Any healthcare professional can refer patients for vision rehabilitation. Patients are encouraged to ask their eye care provider if rehabilitation is appropriate. Several vision rehabilitation service providers are in the area, including Suleiman Alibhai, O.D. (Low Vision Services PLC), in Bethesda, Maryland, Alexandria, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

Most medical insurance plans cover low vision evaluations, but patients should check with their plans before making an appointment.

Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at (301) 951-4444 to speak with a Resource Navigator. For information about Low Vision Services PLC or a vision rehabilitation appointment, call (703) 652-7803.

Practical Solutions for Low Vision

At January's Tech Talk Tuesday event, we asked attendees to share practical, low-tech, or no-tech items that make life easier. Here are some of the most popular:

Food Preparation: For food handling, use task lighting with adjustable brightness and contrast-colored tools. Store dry goods in labeled jars for easy access, employ wide-mouthed funnels and practice liquid pouring with beeping liquid-level devices. Use trays with edges for chopping and flexible, grippy oven gloves.

Lighting: Task lights with variable brightness and portable options like headlamps or neck-hanging flashlights can help ensure visibility for any activity.

Hobbies: Bold-lined paper, pens, and calendars can improve note-taking. Contrast-colored tools can simplify sewing or crocheting with larger hooks.

Safety: Nightlights, step markers, and glare-reducing mats can help to prevent accidents.

Many of these items are available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [maxiaids.com](https://www.maxiaids.com) (800-522-6294), [lssproducts.com](https://www.lssproducts.com) (800-468-4789), [ez2seeproducts.com](https://www.ez2seeproducts.com), and [theblindkitchen.com](https://www.theblindkitchen.com).

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Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 2025

To register for an event, call (301) 951-4444
at least 24 hours prior to the event.

**TUE
11**

Macular Degeneration (Virtual Event)
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Join Alex Reese, M.D., Washington National Eye
Center Ophthalmology Resident, to learn about the
leading cause of low vision for older adults.
Hosted by Washington National Eye Center.

**TUE
11**

Transportation and Navigation (Virtual Event)
6 p.m. – 7 p.m. • Stargardt's Network
Share your favorite navigation tips and strategies!
Hosted by Prevention of Blindness Society.

**WED
12**

How Can a Low Vision Specialist Help Me?
2 p.m. – 3 p.m. • Leisure World Lions Group
Join Judith Goldstein, O.D., and Colette Houssan,
O.D., from the Lions Vision Research and
Rehabilitation Center at Johns Hopkins Medicine
to learn how vision rehabilitation can support you.
To RSVP, call Larry at (908) 770-9111.
Leisure World Clubhouse II Edmondson Room
3300 N Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring, MD

**TUE
18**

Smart Glasses Explained (Virtual Event)

1 p.m. – 2 p.m. • Tech Talk Tuesdays

Speakers: Sree Roy and Rachel Schreiman

Smart glasses are innovative wearable devices designed to be worn on the head or eyes, combining everyday eyewear with advanced technology.

Wondering if they're right for you? Join us!

**WED
19**

What is Orientation and Mobility Training?

Low Vision Town Hall (Virtual Event)

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Special Event

Speaker: Sharon Payne, M.S., Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) and Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT), Director, Able Services

Join us to explore how orientation and mobility (O&M) training can empower individuals

who are visually impaired to move safely and independently in all aspects of their lives. From fall prevention and home safety to strengthening exercises, including chair yoga, O&M skills can provide the confidence to navigate confidently.

Sharon will also discuss overcoming psychological barriers to using a white cane.

Call **(301) 951-4444** to register.

(Additional events on next page)

**THU
20**

**New Resources and Services at
Metropolitan Washington Ear (MWE)**

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. • Vision Resource Group

**Speaker: Rev. Ray Raysor, Executive Director,
Metropolitan Washington Ear**

MWE provides reading and information services, and independent living skills training for blind, visually impaired, and physically disabled people who cannot effectively read print, see plays, watch television programs and films, or view museum exhibits. Join us for an exciting update!

To RSVP, call (301) 656-2797.

Friendship Heights Village Center

4433 South Park Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD



Listen and watch replays of recent webinars and events, including POB Low Vision Town Hall events and Tech Talk events, at: www.youreyes.org/replays

Have you explored our Low Vision Resource Guide? "Your Eyes and Low Vision" is available in a large-print book format AND on our website, youreyes.org, under the "Resources" tab.

Living with Vision Loss

Humor and Hope with Low Vision

By Tara Aziz

When we talk about low vision, the inability to see well is the first thing that comes to mind, but how about some uplifting facts about low vision? Here are some examples of how people with vision impairment are described worldwide.

“Blind as a Bat”: Bats use echolocation to “see” in darkness, showcasing creativity in adaptation.

“Seeing with the Heart”: This phrase highlights wisdom and emotional intelligence.

“Deprived of Sight, Blessed with Insight”: Many traditions link vision loss with heightened spiritual awareness.

“He Who Hears Farther than He Sees”: Some believe vision impairment sharpens other senses, like hearing.

One story that captured this spirit came to mind: A man with vision impairment, using a white cane, was asked by a passerby about his work. He replied, “I’m a photographer.” Surprised, the passerby asked how. The man smiled and said, “I just focus on developing a unique perspective!”

Humor helps us see the world in a new light, reminding us there’s always a reason to smile! Call the POB Low Vision Resource Hotline at (301) 951-4444 to speak with a Resource Navigator.

Visit our Low Vision Resource Centers

Our Resource Navigators provide free vision support services at our Low Vision Resource Centers to help individuals with vision impairment maintain independence. Meet with our team to explore resources, information, and technology. Many of our Navigators, drawing from personal experience with vision impairment, offer expert guidance and support for your vision journey. Visits are by appointment only.

4948 St. Elmo Avenue, Suite 209, Bethesda, MD 20814
105 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Call the POB Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at **(301) 951-4444** to make an appointment.

To also start receiving an electronic copy of this newsletter, please email communications@youreyes.org.

FREE MATTER
For the Blind or
Handicapped

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