



Seeing HopeSM



MAY 2026

TODAY

Getting Around DC with Low Vision

Getting around the city with vision impairment can feel uncertain at first. But with the right tools and support, public transportation can become a reliable and empowering option.

In our area, that experience is shaped in part by the **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Accessibility Advisory Committee**. The committee brings together riders with disabilities, caregivers, and advocates to share real-world feedback and improve how the system works day to day.

Sandy Neuzil, POB's Seeing Hope's Low Vision Community Outreach and Support Group Facilitator, serves on the committee, helping ensure that the perspectives of people with low vision are represented in decisions about accessibility across the system.

(Continued on next page)

**Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington®
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That input shows up in ways riders can use. Metrorail stations include tactile warning strips along platform edges, audible announcements, and clear visual signage. Elevators and escalators are standard across the system, with ongoing efforts to keep them in service.

For those who are new to public transportation or looking to build confidence, WMATA offers free travel training. These sessions provide step-by-step guidance on how to navigate the system safely, from reading signage to boarding trains and buses. For many, this is an important first step toward traveling more independently.

While rail is often the first choice, Metrobus is another valuable option. With audio stop announcements, low-floor entry, and an extensive network, buses can offer added flexibility and reach more neighborhoods across the region.

Public transportation may not feel easy at first. But with practice, training, and the right information, it can open up more of the city and support greater independence over time.

For more resources and tips, call the Seeing Hope Low Vision Resource and Information Hotline at **(301) 951-4444 to speak with a Resource Navigator.**

May is Healthy Vision Month!

Each May, the National Eye Institute celebrates Healthy Vision Month. Learning how to maintain healthy eyes can improve more than just your visual health; it can affect your overall health, too.

More than 37 million Americans have age-related eye conditions that can lead to vision loss or even legal blindness. Common diseases include age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and cataracts.

While getting a regular, comprehensive, dilated eye exam is the only way to catch many of these eye conditions before permanent vision loss occurs. With the right information and resources, you can slow down and, in some cases, even prevent vision loss.

Some everyday tips that can help are:

- Wear sunglasses**
- Eat healthy**
- Exercise regularly**
- Avoid smoking**
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.)**

For more information, visit <http://nei.nih.gov>.

Calendar of Events

MAY 2026

To register for an event, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit www.youreyes.org/events.

**FRI
1**

Seeing Hope Book Club (Virtual Event) **11 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Join us for **Soundtrack** by **Jason Reynolds**, a story of friendship and creativity. Stuy, a young drummer inspired by his mother's band, discovers how music can change everything. To register, visit pobreads.org or call **(301) 951-4444**.

**TUE
12**

Healthy Vision Month (Virtual Event) **11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Low Vision Support Group

Join **Elizabeth Fernandez Paz, M.D.**,

Washington National Eye Center

Ophthalmology Resident, to discuss all things eye health. Learn how making healthy choices and getting regular eye exams can help reduce the risk of vision loss.

**TUE
12**

**Balancing Work and Low Vision
(Virtual Event)**

6 p.m. - 7 p.m. • Stargardt's Network

Join us to learn how to navigate balancing your job and living with low vision. **Sam Seavy, Founder of The Blind Life**, will join us!

**WED
13**

**Assistive Technology Showcase
(In-Person Event)**

1 p.m. - 3 p.m. • Leisure World Lions Group

Join us for an assistive technology fair featuring representatives from a range of companies showcasing products designed for people with vision loss. The event is open to all.

Leisure World Clubhouse I - Maryland Room
3300 N Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring, MD

**TUE
19**

EchoVision Smart Glasses (Virtual Event)

1 p.m. - 2 p.m. • Seeing Hope Tech Talk

Join **Buddy Brannan, Training Specialist at Agiga**, for a demonstration of the EchoVision glasses by Agiga. Learn all about smart glasses that were designed by and for people with visual impairments.

(Additional events on next page)

**WED
20****Waymo and Driverless Cars
(Virtual Event)**

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Seeing Hope Town Hall
Join **Hannah Tuten, Public Affairs Manager at Waymo**, to learn about driverless cars. Hear how the technology works, what to expect, and how it may create new transportation options across the DC metro area.

**THU
21****Aging Eyes (In-Person Event)**

11 a.m - 12 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Join **Lisa Tom, M.D, Washington Eye Physicians and Surgeons, Ophthalmologist**, to discuss how glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes, and other eye health issues can impact vision. Learn why a dilated eye exam is so important.
To register, call **(301) 656-2797**.
Friendship Heights Village Center
4433 South Park Ave., Chevy Chase, MD



Catch up anytime with our growing collection of over 70 videos, including Low Vision Town Halls, Tech Talks, and more. Watch or listen by visiting www.youreyes.org/replays

Seeing Hope with Vision Loss

Social Connection with Low Vision

By Tara Aziz

Let's be honest: one of the most awkward parts of vision loss isn't bumping into furniture—it's bumping into people socially. Faces blur, features disappear, you hear a cheerful "Hi!" and think, Wonderful... but who are you?"

It's embarrassing, frustrating, and yes, it can make you want to avoid social situations altogether. But are we going to hide out at home forever? Absolutely not.

Instead, let's get strategic. First, own it. A simple, confident "Hi, remind me of your name?" or "I recognize your voice, help me out!" works wonders.

Next, listen like a pro. Voices, accents, and catchphrases will become your new superpowers. You can become good at identifying people by how they speak.

And finally, recruit your friends. Let them know it helps when they say their name when greeting you.

Thankfully, social connection doesn't require perfect eyesight, just a little confidence, humor, and a willingness to say, "Okay, who is this, again?"

Call the **Seeing Hope Resource and Information Hotline** at **(301) 951-4444** to speak with a Resource Navigator.

Resource of the Month: WMATA's MetroAccess Paratransit

WMATA's MetroAccess is a shared-ride paratransit service for people living with disabilities who may not have the option to utilize fixed-route public transit, such as Metrobus or Metrorail. The service operates within a three-quarter-mile radius of all Metrorail stations and Metrobus routes in the DC Metro Area.

For additional information on the service and how to apply for eligibility, visit wmata.com/service/accessibility/metro-access.

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

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For the Blind or
Handicapped

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