Seeing Hope℠

NOVEMBER 2026

TODAY

Stories of Hope: Brooke Shelton-Epps

By Kiersten McCollum

Stories of Hope highlights people who continue to pursue their passions while adapting to vision loss.

Brooke Shelton-Epps has spent most of her life itching to achieve a level of independence that always felt just out of reach for someone with limited vision. Now, at 25 years old, she is working toward her second master's degree.

For years, Brooke has managed a retinal detachment in both eyes. While her family and community have always been supportive, it was hard being the only person with severe visual impairment.

Feeling a lack of comfort and independence caused her to heavily rely on her mom to navigate daily life. She wasn't sure if she would be able to explore her passions and aspirations.

(Continued on next page)

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That is, until she met POB's Clinical Director, Dr. Alibhai.

"I told him I had to take a break from school, I didn't know if I was going to finish, and if I was going to be able to get the other degrees I wanted. And he said empathetically, we're going to make it happen; it's not impossible."

Brooke's experience with Dr. Alibhai helped her begin to see her goals as achievable. This May, she graduated with her master's degree in organizational communications.

Months later, she started a second master's degree in education. She also plans to continue pursuing her interests in photography, videography, and graphic design.

Looking ahead, Brooke hopes to show that communications can be a fulfilling and accessible career for people with vision loss and to help create more opportunities for others who share her interests.

Her story is a reminder of what can happen when people have the right support, resources, and encouragement to pursue the goals they set for themselves.

Do you have a **Story of Hope** to share? We'd love to hear from you! Email Tara Aziz at **taziz@youreyes.org** or call **(301) 951-4444.**

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 2026

WED 4

Blind and Low Vision Professionals (Virtual Event)

6 p.m. - 7 p.m. • Peer Support Group

Join us at our inaugural meeting for working-age professionals who are blind or who have low vision. Build a professional peer support network and share practical strategies for daily challenges and career growth. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **youreyes.org/events.**

FRI 6

Seeing Hope Book Club (Virtual Event)

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Join us for **Yesteryear** by **Caro Claire,** a satirical psychological thriller novel. Following the life of Natalie Heller Mills, a social media influencer known for her charming traditional farmhouse lifestyle. One morning, she wakes up in 1855 and must learn to navigate the harsh realities of 19th-century farm life to escape home. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **pobreads.org**

(Additional events on next page)

TUE 10

Healthy Aging (Virtual Event)

11:30 a.m - 12:30 p.m.
Low Vision Support Group
Join **Bhakti Panchal, M.D., Washington National Eye Center Ophthalmology Resident,** to learn about the eye diseases more likely to develop in people with diabetes. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **youreyes.org/events.**

TUE 10

Holiday Season Support (Virtual Event)

6 p.m. - 7 p.m. • Stargardt's Network
Join us to exchange tips on navigating potential challenges and mishaps during the holiday season. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **youreyes.org/events.**

THU 12

Travel Training (In-Person Event)

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Low Vision Support Group
Join **Brigid Doherty, WMATA Orientation and Mobility Specialist,** to discuss Metro Access and travel. Learn how to increase safety and maintain independence while traveling.
To register, call **(301) 656-2797.**
Friendship Heights Village Center
4433 South Park Ave., Chevy Chase, MD

SAT 14

Being the Light: Friends and Family Connection

11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. • In-Person Event

Join us for a luncheon panel discussion moderated by **Jennifer Wood, O.D., F.A.A.O., Low Vision Specialist at POB's Vision Rehabilitation Clinic.** This is a meaningful opportunity for your friends and family to learn more about Low Vision and better understand the challenges it can present. For ticket details and more information, call **(301) 951-4444.**

Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church
3512 Old Dominion Blvd., Alexandria, VA

MON 16

Low Vision Update (In-Person Event)

6 p.m. - 8 p.m. • Leisure World Lions Club

Join **Suleiman Alibhai, O.D., F.A.A.O., Clinical Director of POB's Vision Rehabilitation Clinic and Low Vision specialist,** for a discussion on Low Vision Rehabilitation. Dinner will be available at 5 p.m. for anyone interested in purchasing food. No registration required.

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

(Additional events on next page)

TUE 17

Android Accessibility Features (Virtual Event)

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

Join **Edlyn Jordan, POB Low Vision Resource Navigator,** for a demonstration of the different Android accessibility features. Learn how to customize display settings and utilize features like TalkBack and Live Caption. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **youreyes.org/events.**

WED 18

Aging In Place (Virtual Event)

11 a.m - 12 p.m.

Seeing Hope Low Vision Town Hall

Join **Steve Gurney, Founder of Positive Aging Community,** for a discussion on how to decide whether to age in place or move to an assisted living facility. Learn about how to age in place safely and independently. To register, call **(301) 951-4444** or visit **youreyes.org/events.**

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**

A Name Tag and the Holiday Season

By Tara Aziz

“Visually impaired. Please state your name.”

That was the message on a name tag worn by a wonderful member of our low vision community. Simple, clever, and arguably more useful than another holiday sweater.

As the season of holiday gatherings approaches, many of us anticipate a familiar challenge: recognizing someone you know who is standing three feet away.

A name tag like hers does something remarkable. It replaces an awkward moment with an easy introduction.

Of course, crowded gatherings can be exhausting. Dim lighting, overlapping conversations, and unfamiliar spaces demand extra concentration.

But don't let the effort keep us home. Social connection is good for our spirits, challenges our minds, and brings us into the lovely unpredictability of other people.

This holiday season, let’s show up as we are. And if someone forgets to say their name, perhaps our name tag can do the talking.

Resource of the Month: Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyards

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Program supports people living with hidden disabilities, including vision loss, to help create a more inclusive society. The program has reached more than 300 airports, including Ronald Reagan National Airport. Wearing a lanyard allows people to visually communicate that they might need extra help, time, or patience navigating their environment. For additional information, visit hdsunflower.com.

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

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