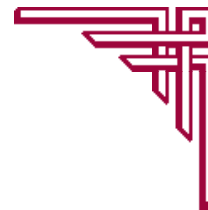


2011 Annual Report State Rehabilitation Council



New Jersey Department of Human Services Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Indepence: Believe and Achieve



In Memory of



Gregory R. Patty

December 3, 1955 – August 17, 2011

Greg Patty was a longtime CBVI staff member. He worked as a Counselor, Regional Supervisor and most recently as the Coordinator of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

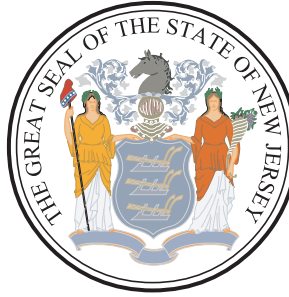
Greg was known by all for his wit, candor, and insightfulness and he is sincerely missed by his CBVI friends, colleagues and the members of the State Rehabilitation Council.

For this reason, we have chosen to honor his many years of service to improving opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired by dedicating the 2011 Annual Report to his memory.

“Life is trying to teach us how to open the doors and begin to look at all parts of ourselves. Once we do that...We begin to have an increasing range of choices and possibilities.”

– Written, believed and lived by: Gregory R. Patty





New Jersey Department of Human Services Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Commission) promotes and provides services in the areas of education, employment, independence, and eye health for persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families, and the community..

The Commission recognizes three categories in its mission, which are:

- (1) Providing specialized services to persons with vision problems,
- (2) Educating and working in the community to reduce the incidence of vision loss, and
- (3) Improving social attitudes concerning people with vision loss.

Detailed information about CBVI services can be found on the website:

<http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>.

Any questions regarding this report, or to request it in alternate formats, please contact Ed Sroczynski at 973-648-7504 or via e-mail at edward.sroczynski@dhs.state.nj.us

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SRC Chairperson

Dear Governor Christie:

I am pleased to present the 2011 Annual Report of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), which supports the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The SRC in fiscal year 2011 continues to facilitate public awareness of CBVI's programs and services to promote the independence and employment of New Jersey residents who are blind or visually impaired. In collaboration with CBVI, the SRC develops strategies for improving the quality of services and increasing successful employment outcomes for CBVI consumers.



Kathleen Wood

During FY 2011, the SRC worked with CBVI to implement a web based Client Tracking System to enhance case management productivity and efficiency. SRC members shared information about employment, self-advocacy, independent living skills and other topics at the Commission-sponsored second annual College Prep Experience (CPE). It is a summer program for twelve high school-aged CBVI consumers, held at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick. The students had the opportunity to earn up to five college credits from Raritan Valley Community College and strengthen their independent skills, which will ease their transition from high school to higher education. We are really proud of this innovative program's success. It serves as a model for agencies serving the blind across the country.

The SRC also participated in four state-wide public forums, during which CBVI consumers and their families offered comments and suggestions regarding CBVI service delivery.

We hope you find this report explanatory of our initiatives.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Wood
Chairperson, State Rehabilitation Council



Vito DeSantis

Executive Director's Report

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Commission) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are proud to submit the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2011 (FFY 2011). We welcome this opportunity to update you regarding our programs' achievements.

FFY 2011 was successful and productive. As the Commission began its second century of providing quality services to consumers who are blind and visually impaired, the SRC proved a strong partner in its encouragement of new initiatives.

During the month of October, which is designated as both Blindness Awareness and Disability Employment Awareness months, CBVI consumers participated in a disability mentoring day at Bank of America's Corporate Headquarters in New York City. Students met with Merrill Lynch staff and corporate recruiters to explore career opportunities and experience the interview process. Other disability mentoring events were held at Novartis Pharmaceuticals (a new participant this year), and at the Hyatt in Morristown.

We are ecstatic about the success of our College Prep Experience Program. This event provides transition-age high school students with a college experience. Twelve students completed the program earning upwards of five college credits from Raritan Valley Community College. They also received career counseling, blindness skills, Orientation and Mobility, assistive technology training and development of social skills at the Joseph Kohn Training Center as part of the college prep program.

Equally successful and into its sixth anniversary is the partnership the Commission enjoys with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in providing the Work Skills Prep program, also for transition-age high school students. The Commission also sponsored an internship experience for high school and college students registered through the LEAD program.

And to round out the success of the year, the Commission and the SRC were able to purchase assistive technology equipment, advancing a new, modern case management system funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

There are many more accomplishments for FFY 2011 included in this report. Thank you for your anticipated review and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vito J. DeSantis
Executive Director
Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired



Overview of the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

In April of 1909, the New Jersey State Legislature directed that a single agency be formed "to provide any and all means which shall be deemed feasible for ameliorating the condition of the blind." The Commission was established in 1910 under the direction of Lydia Young Hayes, a teacher of the blind, who was blind herself and through the advocacy efforts of Helen Keller. The formation of a single agency to administer to the needs of New Jerseyans who are blind was the culmination of a wave of social conscience that swept the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. 2010 marked the 100th anniversary of the agency.

As a result, significant strides were made toward equalizing opportunities for people who were blind or visually impaired. The Commission, known as the Commission for the Blind until 1982, was at the forefront of that movement and still diligently works to prevent blindness as well as provide services that will assist people with vision loss in reaching their highest personal level of independence and economic self sufficiency.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) strives to ensure access to - and services that - enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain their fullest measure of self-reliance, while assuring dignity and full integration into their community. To achieve this, the Commission established specific goals and objectives for serving people living in New Jersey who are blind or visually impaired. The agency operated with a budget of \$33.5 million for State Fiscal Year 2011.

The Commission is headquartered in Newark, NJ at 153 Halsey Street, with a central administrative unit that includes the Office of the Executive Director, Fiscal and Management Operations and the Coordinators of direct service delivery disciplines. The Program Development, Information Systems, Public Information and Staff Development functions, along with the State Rehabilitation Council and the Board of Trustees, also are a part of the Commission's central administration.

Major Service Programs Provided By CBVI

Educational Services:

Once a child is found eligible for services, CBVI works closely with the child, family members and local school personnel to provide Educational services that allow students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind to participate equally with other students in mainstream classroom activities. These services are provided to eligible children (from birth through high school years) and their families.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

Vocational rehabilitation provides a full range of services to assist persons who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind in the development, acquisition or updating of skills that will enable them to secure and maintain employment. This can include working in the labor force or operating a business. This program is a federal-state partnership funded by the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended..

Independent Living Services:

Independent living/training services are designed to help people of any age who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind gain the skills needed to lead a full and productive life. CBVI provides five general types of assistance/instruction with the program, including: daily living skills, communication skills, orientation and mobility, Braille, and eye health.

Prevention Services:

The Prevention of Blindness Program works to save sight and restore vision whenever it is medically possible. CBVI conducts, a variety of educational programs and eye health screenings throughout the state to help detect vision problems and to assist residents of New Jersey with restorative treatment. Annually, Project Prevention screened more than 40,000 New Jerseyans.

SRC Working Principles and Responsibilities

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It gives advice to, and works in partnership with, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.

The members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are appointed by the Governor and convene at least four meetings a year. The meetings, hearings, and forums are publicly announced and open and accessible to the general public. The meetings are held in compliance with the N.J. Open Public Meeting Act, NJSA 10:4-6.

The functions of the SRC are:

- To review, analyze and advise the Designated State Unit regarding performance of its responsibilities under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act;
- To develop, agree to and review State goals and priorities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, in partnership with the Designated State Unit;
- To advise the Designated State Unit and assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required under the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998;
- To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services;
- To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public;
- To coordinate with other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC);
- To establish successful working relationships among the Designated State Unit and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and
- To perform other functions, consistent with the purpose of this title, as the SRC determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.



SRC Board Members

Kathleen Wood, Chair
201-533-4407
kwood.hud@hipcil.org
Heightened Independence Progress –
Hudson Office
**Current/Former VR Applicant or
Recipient Representative**

Russel Anderson
(732) 544-1800 203
russell@cvrus.org
**Center for Vocational Rehabilitation
Community Rehabilitation Program
(CRP) Representative**

Ed Sroczyński
(973) 648-7504
edward.sroczyński@dhs.state.nj.us
NJ Commission for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Agency Liaison to the SRC (Ex-Officio)

Perkie B. Cannon
(973) 631-6347
perkie.cannon@doe.state.nj.us
New Jersey Department of Education-
Office of Special Education Programs
State Education Agency Representative

Lauren Casey
(609) 912-0657
lrcasey1@verizon.net
NJ Council for the Blind
**Advocate for Individuals who are Blind
with Multiple Disabilities Representative**

Vito J. DeSantis
(973) 648-2324
vito.desantis@dhs.state.nj.us
NJ Commission for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Executive Director of CBVI (Ex-Officio)

Chrysoula Fantaousakis, Ph.D.
(908) 729-9115
chrysoula21@aol.com
Kean University
Advocacy Blind/Disabled Representative

James Fox
(732) 581-1209
Jimfox1938@verizon.net
Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) –
NJ Region
Advocacy Blind/Disabled Representative

Alwyn “Al” Glasgow
(201) 568-2452
alwyn.bg@gmail.com
Commercial photography
Business and Industry Representative

James A Jasey
(973) 763-6308
jjasey1@verizon.net 
Beyond the Eyes Support-
Mutual Assistance Group
**Current/Former VR Applicant or
Recipient Representative**

Ed Kawalec
(732) 729-6562
edward.kawalec@dhs.state.nj.us
Joseph Kohn Training Center Staff
(NJ-CBVI)
**Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Representative (Ex-Officio)**

Heather Klouser
(609) 292-9742
hklouser@drnj.org
Disability Rights New Jersey
**Client Assistance Program (CAP)
Representative**

SRC Board Members

Ginger Kutsch

973-539-4425

advocacy@seeingeye.org

The Seeing Eye

Advocacy, Blind/Disabled Representative

Titus Massey

(212) 435-4277

tmassey@panynj.gov

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Business and Industry Representative

Robert E. Paige

(609) 777-4930

robert.paige@dol.state.nj.us

NJ Division of Vocational

Rehabilitation Services

NJ-DVRS Representative (Ex-Officio)

Nicole Pratt

(973) 642-8100

npratt@spannj.org

Statewide Parent Advocacy and Training
Network (SPAN)

**Parent Trainer and Information Center
Representative**

Heather Smith-Bermudez

(973) 491-7378

hsmith-bermudez@njtransit.com

NJ Transit

Business and Industry Representative

Carolyn Wade

(609) 538-8899

grandwadey@aol.com

Communications Workers of America,
Local 1040

**State Workforce Investment Board
(SETC) Representative**

Dorothy Doran

(732) 922-1869

Dorothy.doran34@verizon.net

NJ Statewide Independent Living Council

**Statewide Independent Living Council
Representative**

Rocco Fiorentino

609-206-4300

rocco@Swissfarms.com

Swiss Farm Stores

**Business/Industry and Labor
Representative**

SRC Accomplishments in FFY 2011

The SRC met five times in FFY 2011 to build a more effective working relationship among members, assist with any challenges facing the Commission, advise on new programs being develop and to implement and provide training opportunities.

- The SRC membership was instrumental in recruiting new members and broadening the scope of membership to the Council.
- The SRC membership assisted the Commission to implement corrective actions identified through the monitoring process performed by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration in FFY 2010. Members worked with CBVI Administrative staff to develop specific strategies to address each corrective action item, For example, membership was helpful in developing strategies to revise training curriculum at the Joseph Kohn Training Center.
- The SRC and the Commission conducted four regional public forums in April/May, 2011. Interested parties had the opportunity to make comments and raise issues with the administration of the Commission. As a result of an enhanced communication strategy implemented by the SRC, interested parties from around the state were able to participate in the forums by conference call phone line. Recommendations from the public forums are addressed annually in the agency's State Plan forwarded to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The creation of goals within the State Plan take into considertation comments from the public to identify areas of need of improvement.
- A past SRC Chairperson assisted Commission staff in organizing a Disability Mentoring Day program at Bank of America's headquarters in New York City on October 12th. Four college students attended along with four Commission staff.

Participants attended small-group discussions about specific aspects of working as a person with a disability at Bank of America. Sessions also were held on how to fine-tune their resumes, gain additional job-hunting skills and practice first-hand to secure a job interview.

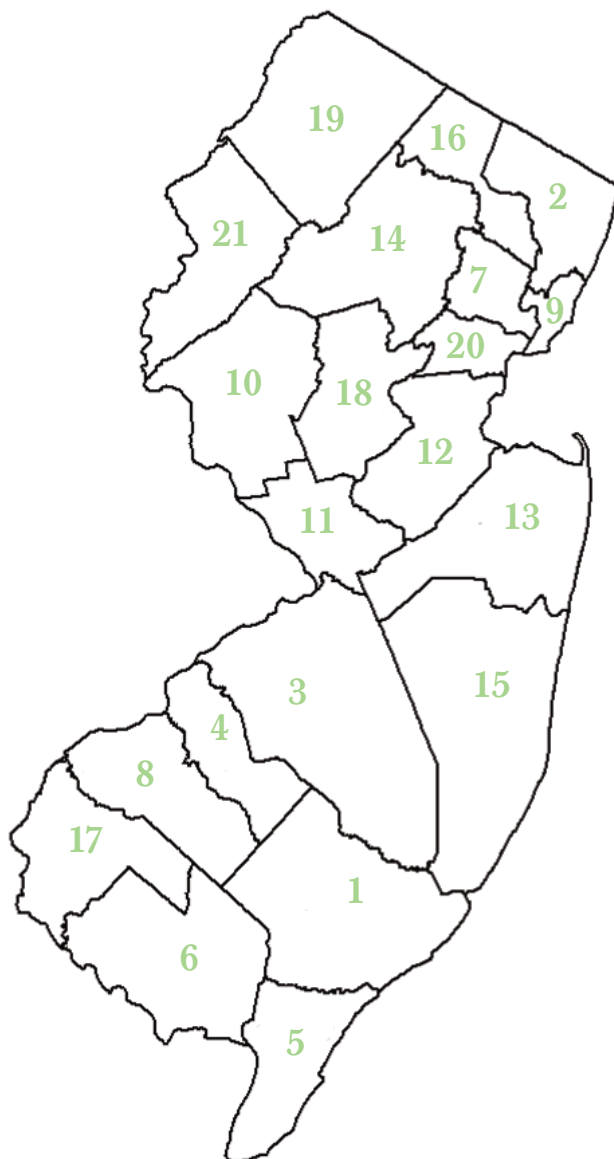
- SRC members worked closely with the Commission to carry out the second annual summer College Prep Experience program, in which twelve high school-aged students were able to earn up to five college credits at Raritan Valley Community College while experiencing dorm life at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center in New Brunswick.
- SRC membership was active in educating State of New Jersey legislative staff on the unique needs of our consumers and the impact that budgetary cuts would have on critical services via the distribution of the SRC Annual Report which was used as an educational tool to share key information about the agency.



Statewide Impact of CBVI Services

Numbers indicate total served by Commission services and/or programs:

1.	Atlantic	354
2.	Bergen	467
3.	Burlington	377
4.	Camden	578
5.	Cape May	92
6.	Cumberland	229
7.	Essex	760
8.	Gloucester	232
9.	Hudson	363
10.	Hunterdon	69
11.	Mercer	385
12.	Middlesex	807
13.	Monmouth	581
14.	Morris	318
15.	Ocean	661
16.	Passaic	530
17.	Salem	61
18.	Somerset	202
19.	Sussex	93
20.	Union	485
21.	Warren	66



Project Prevention

The Project Prevention Unit has been operational since 1996. Targeted populations continue to be in areas where medical care is lacking or insufficient. Any business or organization in New Jersey can request a vision screening by contacting the Commission's Project Prevention Unit Coordinator Sunil Parikh at (973) 648-7400.



Statistics show that 50 percent of all incidences of blindness could have been prevented with proper medical eye care. The goal of the Project Prevention program is to save sight and restore vision for New Jersey residents whenever it is medically possible. CBVI conducts and sponsors a variety of educational programs and eye health screenings throughout the state to detect vision problems. The Commission

provides vision and diabetes screenings predominantly to traditionally underserved populations, and connects these individuals to essential CBVI services, including Vocational Rehabilitation.

2011 Highlights (Number of people served)

Adult Vision Screening (7,304)
Pre-School Vision Screening (26,018)
Mobile and Migrant Screening (7,530)
Diabetic Eye Screening (1,848)

Total Individuals Screened (42,700)

Total Number of Screenings (889)
Referred for further Evaluation (8,300)
Referred to CBVI (1,982)

Additional Services:

Referred to Community Services (2994)
Prescriptions for Eye Glasses (3193)
Vouchers for Eye Glasses (78)

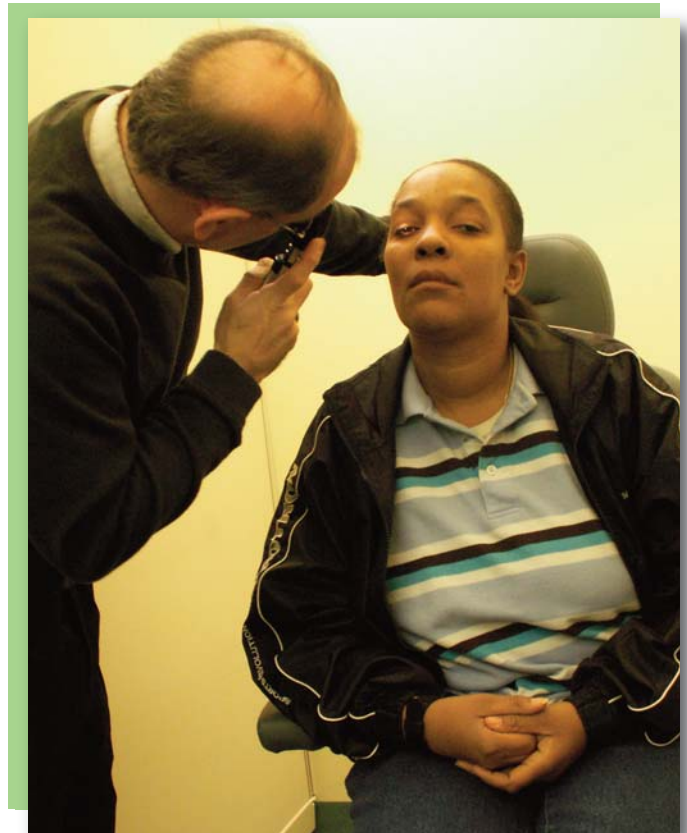
Project Prevention continues to adjust to the challenges of a difficult fiscal atmosphere. As promised in our last SRC report, it searched for alternative resources to meet the eye health needs of target populations in New Jersey. Three private grants were received, and as a direct result the agency was able to increase the number of screenings performed and serve a larger number of New Jersey residents in need of proper eye care. Additionally a memorandum of agreement was implemented to make available three optometric residents to provide professional support in several fixed sites at no cost to the Department. At least 500 additional people were screened as a result of this initiative with the possibility of expanding the program.

Location and schedules of fixed sites can be accessed through CBVI web site:
www.cbvi.nj.gov.

Project Prevention referred more than 30 individuals to CBVI's VR program and will continue its efforts to increase these referrals. Last year, 25 individuals were referred to the VR program.

Project Prevention Goals for 2012

- Restore the number of people screened to previous levels and ultimately increase to 43,000 people
- Continue to pursue grants to expand the program
- Continue to serve as a front-line referral source to CBVI VR services



Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The SRC is pleased to acknowledge the contributions of the Commission's staff in assisting our consumers to achieve increased levels of independence and obtain employment. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are authorized from a federally funded program emanating from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The VR program is a State-Federal partnership with state government providing matching funds.

VR services provided by the Commission under this program are designed to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services includes:

- Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs by qualified personnel;
- VR counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice, including referral and services from other agencies;
- Physical and mental restoration services;
- Vocational and other training services;
- Maintenance and transportation related to the rendering of any VR services;
- Vocational rehabilitation services to family members to assist in achieving the employment goal for an individual with a disability, e.g., family counseling;
- Interpreter services, including sign language and oral interpreter services, for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and tactile interpreting services for individuals who are deaf-blind;
- Independent living skills instruction including personal and home management;
- Orientation and mobility services to instruct in methods of safe community travel;
- Services to assist students to transition from school to work;
- Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;

- Supported employment services;
- Personal assistance services, including reader services;
- Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies;
- Technical assistance to individuals who are pursuing self employment;
- Rehabilitation technology services and devices; and
- Post-employment services, i.e., short term services required to keep a job



Standards and Indicators

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has established evaluation standards and performance indicators for all state Vocational Rehabilitation programs, which include outcome and related measures of program performance. RSA mandates that state Vocational Rehabilitation programs submit performance data on an annual basis. The state-specific and national data is compiled and analyzed for tracking performance success or need for improving performance levels.

The Evaluation Standards assess Vocational Rehabilitation program impact on employment using Performance Indicators. These indicators measure employment outcomes not just in terms of numbers, but also in terms of their impact on meaningful, quality of life issues, such as salaries and placements within regular competitive work settings. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired utilizes the Standards and Indicator to benchmark the quality of services that are provided to consumers. The Quality Assurance Unit compiles the data on a monthly basis and distributes the report to administrators, managers, and vocational rehabilitation supervisors. Plans and goals to increase the effectiveness of the VR program are developed based on these reports. Despite challenging economic conditions, this year the Commission surpassed expectations for both overall Evaluation Standards set by the RSA and exceeded required levels on 5 of 7 Performance Indicators.

Below are the RSA standards and the Commission's performance for the Federal fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011

Total number of individuals employed:

RSA expects to see a matching or a yearly increase.

FFY 2009 – 279

FFY 2010 – 288

FFY 2011 – 287

Percent of individuals who are earning at least minimum wage:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 35.40%

FFY 2009 – 93%

FFY 2010 – 95%

FFY 2011 – 94%

Percent of individuals who achieve an employment outcome after the development of an employment plan:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 68.90%

FFY 2009 – 68%

FFY 2010 – 70%

FFY 2011 – 74%

Percent of individuals employed who have a significant disability:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 89.00%

FFY 2009 – 100%

FFY 2010 – 100%

FFY 2011 – 100%

Ratio of the hourly wage of individuals employed compared to the state average hourly wage:

RSA expects CBVI to meet or exceed this standard.

RSA Standard – 0.59

FFY 2009 – 0.54

FFY 2010 – 0.60

FFY 2011 – 0.55



Change in the percent of individuals employed whose current earnings are their primary source of economic support:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 30.40%

FFY 2009 – 34.4%

FFY 2010 – 40.1%

FFY 2011 – 42%

Ratio of the service rate minority individuals compared to the non-minority rate:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 0.8

FFY 2009 – 0.92

FFY 2010 – 0.82

FFY 2011 – 0.85

Breakdown of the types of jobs individuals who participated in the VR program attained:

3.83%	Management
0.70%	Business and Financial
1.74%	Computer and Mathematical
1.05%	Architecture and Engineering
0.70%	Life, Physical, and Social Sciences
3.14%	Community and Social Services
0.70%	Legal
6.27%	Education, Training, and Library
2.79%	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
2.79%	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
4.18%	Healthcare Support
3.48%	Protective Service
7.32%	Food Preparation and Serving
4.18%	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
3.48%	Personal Care and Service
10.10%	Sales
19.16%	Office and Administrative Support
0.00%	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
3.83%	Construction and Extraction
3.48%	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
4.53%	Production
4.18%	Transportation and Material Moving
6.27%	Homemaker
2.09%	Vending Facility Operator (Business Enterprise Program)



Business Enterprise Program

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the State Licensing Agency (SLA) for the Randolph-Sheppard program. The Business Enterprise Program currently oversees the operation of fifty nine (59) locations in New Jersey. The types of operations include a single person operation (dry stand), snack bar, café, cafeteria, two military dining facilities and vending machine only operation.

Individuals who wish to enter the BEP program are required to be legally blind, have a high school diploma (or GED) and be a United States citizen. The BEP staff is comprised of a Manager, six Field Representatives, one part-time VR Counselor, one TES employee overseeing vending services contracts and one Senior Therapist Program Assistant.



2011 Highlights:

Total gross sales: FIGURES PENDING
 Operator average net income: PENDING
 Total number of operators served: 54
 Total number of consumers evaluated: 12
 Total number of consumers trained: 3
 Total number of consumers receiving placements: 2

- Work has been completed to open a Dunkin Donuts within the Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, New Jersey

2012 Initiatives:

- Plans to complete the renovation of the location at the Hudson County Administration Building, Jersey City New Jersey. The facilitate is dated and needs a face lift to continue to atrack customers.
- Plan and complete renovations for the location at the Peter J. Rodino Federal Building in Newark, NJ

Disability Mentoring Day

In recognition of Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Commission participated in Disability Mentoring Day events at Bank of America and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. Both events provided the opportunity for CBVI consumers to meet and learn from business professionals. HR recruiters provided contact information for follow-up to facilitate CBVI's employment initiatives.

The Bank of America hosted its annual Disability Mentoring Day event on October 12, 2011 at its corporate headquarters in New York City. The participants included several organizations that work directly with individuals with disabilities from Manhattan and New Jersey, including the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Lighthouse International and the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Four college students under the Commission's sponsorship were in attendance.

During the morning session, Bank of America staff spoke about their diversity and inclusion initiatives. The discussion featured Disability Affinity Groups; which have a mission to foster partnerships, to increase awareness, to provide employment opportunities and to promote Bank of America's support for individuals with disabilities. Each student participant (mentee) was paired with a member of the Bank of America staff. The mentees accompanied their mentors to learn, first-hand, the day-to-day operations of their chosen field of interest.



During the afternoon, Bank of America employees with disabilities shared their stories about how they carry out their job duties including challenges they overcame to achieve success. The panel discussion centered on Living and Working with Disabilities and finding the Balance.” This was followed by a presentation by the Human Resource staff, which gave instruction on completing job applications, interview preparation, effective resume writing and business ethics. The students left the event equipped with recruiter contact information to follow-up in their field of interest as employment and internship opportunities become available.

On October 19, 2011 the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, (DVRS) joined Novartis Pharmaceuticals at their East Hanover Campus for a Disability Mentoring Day event. Four job ready CBVI consumers attended. Additional participants included representatives from local colleges, universities and the Veterans Administration.

Novartis staff spoke about dedication to diversity and inclusion and touched on a variety of activities in place to further this initiative. The mentees participated in breakout groups with Novartis staff. Discussions focused on Finance, Business and Administrative Services and Research and Development. CBVI presented an overview of the agency’s mission, provision of services, accommodations in the workplace and employment outreach initiatives. This was followed by a similar presentation by DVRS.

During a special address Roman Murphy, a 26-year old paraplegic wrestler and motivational speaker, shared his story about how he overcame obstacles to achieve success. A panel discussion, led by the Co-Chair of the Novartis People with Disabilities and Chronic Health Issues, featured employees with disabilities who addressed how they achieve success on the job.

A Novartis recruiter led a workshop that focused on resume preparation and interview techniques. Each CBVI consumer met with a Novartis recruiter and left with contact information for follow-up.

COSD – Full Access Student Summit



Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) is a national professional association that endeavors to create networking opportunities for college students with disabilities in order to improve their rates of employment. COSD works collaboratively with employers to identify innovative methods for recruiting and hiring college graduates. COSD conducts networking and education summits

nationwide with regional and national employers and sixty college students with disabilities. The summits are designed to provide employers with a better understanding of college students with disabilities and encourage inclusion of students within corporate diversity recruitment plans. This two day event provides students with the opportunity to meet, ask questions, and network with employers in a more intimate fashion.

On November 4th and 5th, 2011, the Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities held a Full Access Summit at the Hyatt in Morristown. A variety of agencies serving individuals with disabilities throughout the state of New Jersey participated. A total of 60 current or recently graduated college students, both from undergraduate and graduate degree programs, were selected through a competitive process to take part in the event. Four students under CBVI's sponsorship were selected. The students were made aware of the program through their college counselors at the Commission and were provided assistance in completing the application and obtaining transportation to the event.

Organizations including Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Verizon, Cisco Information Systems, and Wal-Mart took part in the event. The students met with the employers for dinner and a game night. The following day small group breakout sessions were held, with students and employers to cover resume writing, interview skills, internship and employment opportunities. At the end of the event, each student was given a list of each employer's name and contact information for accessing potential internship and employment opportunities.

Joseph Kohn Training Center

The Joseph Kohn Training Center, (JKTC) is a state of the art residential facility that offers rehabilitation and employment services for blind and visually impaired residents of the State of New Jersey. Located in New Brunswick, the JKTC accommodates up to twenty-four consumers. There is no fee for participating in the program for New Jersey residents. The mission of the JKTC is to assist blind and visually impaired individuals to lead full and productive lives by providing a full range of services designed to facilitate independence and employment.

Formerly known as the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, the JKTC expanded its program from 16 weeks to 20 weeks beginning with a two-week comprehensive assessment. The assessment findings are incorporated into an Individualized Training Plan which lists the participant's goals and charts the course of the program. The plan addresses the individual's personal adjustment, vocational planning and includes an internship placement with a business in the local community which is scheduled toward the end of the program.

The Center's program curriculum is designed to enable participants to become aware of their abilities, harness their strengths, foster their independence and establish a realistic employment plan.

A basic tenet of the program curriculum focuses on facilitating participants' adjustment to the loss of vision. Each student, regardless of their remaining vision, is required to involve themselves in all areas of training using sleep shades, which is an instructional tool that fosters sensory development and the mastery of blindness skills. This tool is utilized in the core areas of instruction including:



Braille Instruction/Communication Skills: This training enables participants to utilize Braille to accomplish day-to-day activities including, labeling kitchen items, personal folders, grocery lists, telephone numbers, etc. Reading and writing Braille is introduced to all students regardless of their degree of remaining vision. Training also includes literacy and personal communication such as handwriting, use of the telephone, tape-recorder, and electronic equipment for storage and retrieval of information.

Activities of Daily Living Skills: This instruction includes teaching adaptive skills necessary to effectively perform everyday responsibilities such as personal grooming, laundering, sewing, budgeting, grocery shopping and maintaining household cleanliness. In addition, training is provided in both basic and adaptive techniques for safe and independent functioning in the kitchen.

Orientation and Mobility Skills: This training teaches participants to orient to the environment by utilizing non-visual cues and safe cane techniques to facilitate safe travel skills. The Center's environment allows for intensive practice to enable consumers to internalize skills and concepts while progressing towards becoming a safe and confident independent traveler.

Technology Skills: Instruction includes training in the use of assistive technology to access the computer. Participants improve their typing skills and acquire basic computer skills through the use of appropriate adaptive software. Participants receive instruction to access the Internet, E-mail, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access.

Nursing Services: Professionals provide participants with information about their dietary requirements, eye condition, overall eye health and instruction in adaptive techniques to administer medications safely and independently. The nursing staff collaborates with program participants along with their personal physicians and a dietitian to attend to their health care needs.

Academic Skills Testing and Instruction: Identifies written proficiency, reading and math levels. Individual instruction enables participants to raise their academic levels and improve their writing skills. Instruction is geared toward goals outlined in the participants' employment plan.

Career Assessment and Vocational Counseling: Incorporates standardized testing to help participants learn about their vocational interests, aptitudes, strengths and skill sets. Vocational counseling helps a participant to identify a viable vocational direction through synthesizing test results and further clarifying interests, abilities and developing a realistic vocational plan. Participants gain practical experience through job shadowing and a short term Internship at the end of the program.

The center's philosophy, environment and new curriculum foster a realistic, positive attitude toward vision loss. Through the program, participants adjust to their visual impairment, and access the necessary tools and knowledge to pursue an active lifestyle and obtain employment.



On Friday, September 16th, a delegation from the Siloam Foundation for the Visually Handicapped of Seoul, South Korea visited the JKTC. The guests were extremely interested in all facets of the training techniques, equipment and assistive technology used by staff.

Technological Support Services



CBVI offers blind and visually impaired New Jersey residents help in acquiring assistive technology that is necessary to gain or retain employment. Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

CBVI's Technological Support Services department assists consumers to have direct access to computer equipment and other information technology. The goal of the unit is to minimize barriers to task performance by taking into account the consumers specific needs, such as an individual who is blind or visually impaired. The agency's Technological Services Specialists (TSS) are responsible for maintaining and staffing four comprehensive and up-to-date Regional Technology Assistance Centers (RTAC) located throughout New Jersey.

Each RTAC is stocked with a variety of assistive technology devices and open to the public by individual or group appointments. Three of these labs are located in each of the CBVI Regional Offices (Newark, Toms River and Cherry Hill) and the fourth is operated in partnership with the NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center and is located in Trenton, NJ.

In addition, the TSS staff performs technology assessments and skill evaluations for consumers who are seeking employment and require equipment adaptations to assist in their work and/or educational environment. The specialists make recommendations suitable for each consumer's unique situation, such that it would enable the individual to efficiently address his/her professional or academic responsibilities.

Following the evaluation, a comprehensive report is completed by the TSS, which includes recommendations for equipment, software, integration and/or training. Recommended training is time limited and goals are specifically linked to tasks and learning objectives via vocational training or on the job. The report details the number of training hours anticipated for the consumer to reach proficiency in the needed skill sets. Training services are provided by three agencies under contract with the Commission serving the Northern, Central and Southern regions of the State. Training is provided one-on-one with consumers in their home, at training locations or work-site. Contracted agencies provide periodic progress reports and a final report when training is completed.

The TSS staff also will install, setup, and configure recommended equipment for consumers on-site and provide brief instruction on proper utilization of assistive technology.

The TSS staff work with outside agencies, businesses and institutions to evaluate work environments with respect to accessibility for visually impaired employees. The specialists also suggest appropriate solutions to outside agencies that would make these workplaces and the software applications they use more compatible with assistive technology.

College Prep Experience

During the summer of 2011, the Commission partnered with Raritan Valley Community College, (RVCC) for the second annual College Prep Experience Program, (CPE), which followed on the success of the Program held in 2010. Twelve blind and visually impaired high school students participated in this innovative project which took place from July 5 through August 19, 2011. The students participated in two college courses earning five credits for transfer to the college or university of their choice.

All of the students took part in the RVCC College Experience course, which was collaboratively taught by a Raritan Valley faculty member and a Commission instructor. The course provided a comprehensive overview of strategies for negotiating college life. This included college expectations, technological resources, time management, critical thinking and study skills. Each student also was enrolled in a course of their choice selected from the RVCC Summer Course Catalogue.

During the program, all students resided at the Joseph Kohn Training Center where they participated in a variety of activities to supplement their experience at RVCC. The activities included group lessons related to communication skills, independent living, assistive technology and career exploration. On Friday mornings, the students participated in presentations and discussions on a variety of topics, such as college life issues, college scholarships and financial aid, independent travel, business principles and protocols, and career planning. Discussion panels included current college students, Commission college counselors and former Commission consumers who are successfully employed.

Family members and friends of the participants were invited to a celebratory breakfast on August 19th to commemorate the students' accomplishments. All students received

certificates of completion and a blue and gold T-shirt with the CPE logo and dates as a remembrance of their participation. Four students spoke about the benefits of the program, the skills and confidence they acquired and how they now are better prepared to enter college.

Due to the ongoing success of the program, the third annual College Prep Experience is scheduled for summer, 2012.



Work Skills Prep Program

This summer marked the sixth anniversary of CBVI's partnership with the School of Education at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) to run the innovative Work Skills Prep summer program. The Work Skills Prep Program is for high school students who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired, ages sixteen to twenty-one. These students were identified as having additional challenges in gaining employment upon graduation, such as limited work experience or additional disabilities. The goal of the program is to give students the opportunity to learn and/or enhance their skills to become competitive in the job market.

Twenty-four high school students participated in the June 26th through July 23rd, 2011 program. Each student attended one of the two consecutive two-week sessions. Students lived in dorms and attended classes on TCNJ's campus. Students also worked various jobs in locations such as The Talking Book and Braille Center, NJ Manufacturers Insurance Company, Barnes and Noble, Trenton Thunder/Riverfront Stadium and Sodexo food service facilities on the TCNJ campus.

The student's class work focused on functional academics stressing Braille/print literacy, use of assistive technology, and person-centered planning. Instruction was provided on such activities as developing a resume, improving communication skills, dressing for success, and learning about team work. Each student worked at least a half day during weekdays to sample the various job sites and to explore their career interests.

Students learned alternative methods for performing activities of daily living by gaining skills in using assistive technology devices and refining skills to accommodate for low or no vision. All students were required to create a PowerPoint presentation that detailed their goals for the future and the support they will need to achieve those goals. Students were expected to make a formal presentation to their peers, instructional staff, and guests on the final day of classes. Each session had a graduation ceremony that was held on the last Saturday to celebrate students' talents and accomplishments.

Even with a very busy schedule, there was some time for extra curricular activities. In the evenings, students attended an audio-described movie, went bowling, out for ice cream, made use of the many facilities of the TCNJ campus, or developed their own evening events. Students also presented a talent show and participated in various arts and crafts projects. In addition, students went to the Quakerbridge Mall and some community activities.

A key component of the Work Skills Prep Program included an assessment of each student's computer skills with adaptive software, vocational skills and interests, and functional academic skills.

Each student was interviewed by a staff member on their goals for the future. Assessment reports were shared with the students and their family/guardian, the local school district case manager, and CBVI Education and Transition caseworkers.

Many parents have communicated their appreciation to the Commission for the services and information this program provided about their children. CBVI and TCNJ plan to offer this program again in the summer of 2012; two, two-week long sessions, a successful model.



Deaf-Blind Services

The staff of Deaf-Blind Services provides transition and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with dual sensory impairments, i.e., the combination of hearing and vision loss. The agency employs two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (Deaf-Blind Specialists), one located in the Newark office serving the northern part of the state and the other serving the southern half of the state from the Cherry Hill office. Special attention is given to the unique communication needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. Interpreter services and special equipment also may be provided to help individuals achieve their employment goals. The Deaf-Blind Services staff can provide a full range of services to help individuals who are deaf-blind to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment.



The Deaf-Blind Services Unit recently inaugurated the new Support Service Providers (SSP) program in collaboration with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). The program is called Support Service Providers –New Jersey or SSP-NJ. SSP's relay visual and environmental information, act as sighted guides and facilitate communication for adults who are deaf-blind. Individuals who are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be eligible to receive up to sixteen hours per month of SSP services. By promoting and supporting employment for adults who are deaf-blind, SSP-NJ encourages community integration through the development and implementation of a statewide network of Support Service Providers.

State Rehabilitation Council Goals for FFY 2012

- The SRC will continue to meet at least five times in FFY 2012 to maintain its effective working relationship among members and provide training opportunities.
- The SRC Chair will work collaboratively with agency administration, the SRC Chair for the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) to develop training on the role and responsibilities of new Council members for Councils of both agencies.
- The SRC members with visual impairments will participate in Commission sponsored programs and activities to share their knowledge base and expertise with consumers and to serve as mentors and role models.
- The SRC will continue to be involved in public relations outreach so that agencies and individuals will better understand blindness and visual impairments.
- The SRC will assist the Commission in implementing initiatives to enhance the Summer College Prep Experience and maximize students' success as they transition from high school to employment and higher education.
- The SRC will provide feedback to the Commission on implementing the new case management/database system called FACTS – (Fully Accessible Client Tracking System) which will greatly enhance case management productivity and efficiency.
- The SRC will assist the Commission in implementing the corrective action plan developed in response to RSA's monitoring of the agency's operations in FFY 2010.
- The SRC will revamp and expand SRC Sub-Committees to foster collaboration and address the agency's VR initiatives.
- The SRC's Policies and Procedures Sub-Committee will continue to review agency's policies and procedures and make any necessary recommendations for improvements to the agency's administration of services.

Success Stories

Amy Szumel



Facing the challenges that accompany sudden loss of vision requires support, resiliency and fortitude. At the height of her career as a Registered Nurse, 40 year old Amy Szumel was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy. Amy immediately started laser treatments as her vision diminished. At first Amy was very depressed and became withdrawn. She didn't want to do anything unless it was absolutely necessary. Going to work was increasingly difficult. Her family, though very supportive, didn't know how to best respond to her depressive reaction as this was out of character with her usual upbeat attitude. Amy reflected, "the hardest call I ever made in my life was to the CBVI. It is also the life saver I needed." Amy was familiar with CBVI services through referring her patients who needed services to address their vision loss. Amy recalled her struggle at the time, "it is different when you have to come to grips with reality. My independence before the call was threatened." "CBVI was so caring, nurturing and always there for me." She said that her VR counselor was her angel and added, "CBVI actually made me feel like I could trust them with the darkest problems of my life." In her work as a Registered Nurse and Certified Diabetes Educator, (RN, CDE), Amy revealed that she has seen many patients over the years with visual problems. "I guess I never thought it would happen to me, CBVI helped me to stop blaming myself. My husband, my kids, and my mom have been my cheerleaders, never letting me give up." All of the support she received inspired Amy to be positive and adopt the attitude to **never give up**.

Amy said that her greatest achievement was in her role as a nurse at Camp Nejeda in August 2011. The camp serves children who are diagnosed with diabetes. "I was so nervous to go there, fearing I wouldn't be able to keep up with all of the charting/documentation that the nurses must do with their campers, but I did it! And every night I taught the campers about life skills and diabetes management." Amy used her visual impairment to inspire the campers to take the best care of themselves.

Amy works for the Ocean County Family Care Center as a Registered Nurse/Certified Diabetes Educator. Her plans for the future include, continuing her work as an RN, CDE, attending camp next summer, and plans someday perhaps, to open a bed and breakfast with her husband – for individuals with special needs. According to Amy, achieving success is being able to live life to the fullest, as independently as possible. "I refuse to be disabled, I am alter-abled."

Success Stories

Mark Colasurdo

There are individuals who rise to a level of excellence in spite of life's obstacles and barriers, who serve as an inspiration to us all. Eighteen year old Mark Colasurdo is no exception. At birth, one of triplets, it was discovered that Mark was visually impaired. With corrective eye surgery his vision improved with fairly good functional vision for most of his youth. Then, in January of his Sophomore Year in High School (2009), he suffered a retinal detachment which left him totally blind in his right eye. To lose so much vision all at once and still persevere as Mark has, required a lot of strength. Although disappointed that his vision could not be restored, Mark did not let this sudden loss stop him. He found a way to still run track and cross-country. His grades did not drop. Mark received assistance from CBVI. He learned to use adaptive technology quickly and acquired safe travel skills. He remained an honor student and worked as a busboy/waiter at a local Bible Conference Center on the weekends.



To further enhance his independent skills, Mark took the first semester of his junior year of high school off to attend a fulltime rehabilitation program at the Louisiana Center for the Blind where he acquired a full range of blindness skills to adapt to his sudden loss of vision. Mark became proficient with Braille and adaptive technology. He learned to travel independently using his cane and to assertively advocate for himself. After completing the program, Mark finished high school on time at the top of his class with honors from the Marine Academy of Technical and Environmental Sciences, located in Manahawkin, NJ. Concurrently, Mark continued community activities, including serving as an intern assisting the staff at Children's Specialized Hospital in Toms River; participating in beach clean-up days at school; serving as a member of the National Honor Society; assisting with the construction of a house for a needy family in partnership with Habitat for Humanity; serving as a fundraiser for NFB's Imagination Fund, creating a Facebook page with links for family members and friends to donate, raising \$1250; and winning the trip to the NFB Blind Drivers Challenge in Daytona Florida, just to name a few.

Mark acknowledged that he loves an academic challenge. He was accepted into several colleges and granted a full scholarship from one prestigious University. He began attending Lehigh University in the fall of 2011, enrolling in the new double-major Integrated Degree in Engineering/Arts and Sciences Program. Mark is planning to double major in Biomedical Engineering and Behavioral Science.

Mark said that upon graduation, he intends to further his education by either attending graduate school for an advanced degree in Biomedical Engineering, or by going to medical school. Mark is aspiring to apply to Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University to complete his graduate studies. He would like to apply his acquired skills and education towards stem cell research with a focus on neuroscience. "I have an open mind about any direction that it can take me. Honestly, I am pretty open to wherever my passions and education lead me, as long as I am led by my heart and nothing else."

Success Stories

Rania Ismail



“The only thing that matters in the end is that you finish what you started.” These are the words of 26 year old Rania Ismail who persevered and achieved success despite the many obstacles she faced. Blind from birth, her family initially had difficulty acclimating to her blindness, but soon made the necessary adjustments. “When I was growing up, blindness was normal to me. I was treated like everyone else by the other kids and my family.”

Being around other blind individuals who served as role models helped her acclimate and develop a strong attitude to persevere through life’s difficulties.

At age 14, Rania sustained a neck injury that left her with chronic pain. At the time, massage therapy was her only source of relief. Rania knew that through her own experience she wanted to become a massage therapist and provide the same relief to others who live with chronic pain. Later, after completing an 8-month program at Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, Rania researched training programs and learned that a local community college in her area offered a certificate program in massage therapy. Rania was not encouraged to enter the certificate program. “I faced a lot of discouragement. Some people didn’t believe that I could become a massage therapist, either due to my blindness or my learning disability. Some of them even tried to convince me to change my career choice, but I wouldn’t budge.” Although the program at the community college didn’t work out the way she hoped, Rania learned a great deal and pushed forward to achieve her goal of becoming a massage therapist. She persevered despite the advice of others who tried to convince her otherwise.

Through her research, Rania found the Institute for Therapeutic Massage, (ITM.) When she toured the campus, met with the admissions counselor and instructors, she had a strong sense that she was fully supported to successfully complete the program. Rania began at ITM in September of 2009 and graduated with a certificate in therapeutic massage in July of 2010. Immediately following graduation, she became a New Jersey state certified massage therapist. “It took me three years to achieve my goal. I will admit that it was a lot of hard work but it was worth it! I made it because of my willingness and my determination to learn.

Rania is a member of the National Honor Society, Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals the Holistic Mentorship Network, member of the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey and The National Association of Blind Students. She is a mentor for blind students who are interested in massage therapy and those enrolled in massage certificate programs.

Rania works part time at a local salon. She is planning to establish a business and employ both blind and sighted massage therapists. Her view of achieving success is “believe in yourself.” Rania is sustained by the words of Christopher Reeve who said, “For everyone who thought I couldn’t do it, for everyone who thought I shouldn’t do it, for everyone who said, ‘It’s impossible’. See you at the finish line!”

Success Stories

Zoraida Krell

There are individuals with integrity and fortitude who overcome obstacles and utilize the available tools to live a full productive life. Zoraida Krell, a long-time resident of Bergen County, New Jersey is such a person. Zoraida was born with a visual impairment that was not noticeable, at first. After she entered the first grade, Zoraida's parents noticed she had limited night vision. Zoraida's school teacher sent home a note indicating that she was having difficulty with her vision in the classroom, which prompted the first visit to the eye doctor. At that time she was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. "My parents didn't really understand my condition, the fact that I had central vision on my left eye made it seem like there wasn't much wrong." Despite her visual impairment Zoraida was not given special treatment from her family. Throughout her childhood, she compensated for her restricted vision by focusing on stationary activities such as reading, jumping rope in place, playing cards and board games.



After graduating from New Milford High School, Zoraida went on to achieve a certificate in Microprocessing from Bergen Community College in Paramus, NJ. Shortly after receiving her certificate, Zoraida began working as an Events Coordinator/Executive Assistant for Verizon. She maintained this position for 5 years and subsequently worked in the capacity of Office Coordinator and Regional Administrative Manager at the Huntington Learning Center, Inc. in Oradell, NJ. In 2009, Zoraida began working as an Executive Administrator at the National Corporate Office for BB Franchising LLC. The position required her to commute from her home in Bergenfield to Jersey City, on a daily basis. Zoraida remembers, "The Hoboken Terminal was beating me. I was pretty upset about this – I bumped into a few of those immovable concrete poles too many times."

Zoraida contacted CBVI for assistance. She was taught safe travel techniques with the use of the cane and her commute soon became more manageable. "I can now go into the city by myself on the bus and get through the terminal much, much easier. The cane seems to make me visible when I was invisible before. Zoraida was introduced to the ZoomText Screen Magnification program which significantly improved her ability to carry out work tasks. Zoraida remarked that the assistance she received from CBVI helped her to not give up. The tools she received provided a newly found freedom and confidence to maintain her full time position as an Executive Administrator. Zoraida's future plans include remaining in the workforce and maintaining a home in Bergenfield with her husband and new kitten, Manny. She also is enjoying her new affiliation with the NJ State Library's Talking Book/Braille Centers' Book Club.

Did you know?

- The NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center offers an array of leisure reading and magazines in digital audio, Braille and some large print. Call 1-800-792-8322 or visit: www.njsltbbc.org
- Bookshare.org offers thousands of leisure reading and academic materials in text to speech and embossed Braille formats. www.bookshare.org
- Choice Magazine Listening offers free bi-monthly audio anthology of selections from current magazines and periodicals. www.choicemagazinelistening.org
- Learning Allied is a major provider of academic books on all levels in DAISY-format CD or download. www.learningallied.org

If you are blind or visually impaired you may be entitled to:

- Newspaper reader services from NFB – NEWSLINE, sponsored by CBVI at 1-888-882-1629
- A telephone accessed listing of employment opportunities over NFB – JOBLINE at 1-800-414-5748 (ask your CBVI caseworker for more information).

The Commission may be able to assist with:

- Vocation Rehabilitation Services to help you obtain employment
- Rehabilitation teaching to help you perform daily living tasks
- Orientation and Mobility instruction to assist you in traveling independently
- Referral to community resources for housing, financial assistance and other supported services
- The Commission will respond to your concerns if you are dissatisfied with the services you receive. Call the Office of the Executive Director at 973-648-2325.
- The Client Assistance Program can assist you in resolving any disputes regarding provision of VR services by calling 1-800-922-7233
- Para-transit can provide transportation to work, medical appointments, etc. Call the NJ Transit Office of Special Services at 1-800- 772-2287 to get the phone number for your county

The Commission may be able to:

- Provide information on aids and appliances adapted for your use
- Refer you to a program that can match you with a community companion or volunteer
- Refer you to community based programs and services that will aid you in achieving your employment goals.

SRC Meeting Dates - 2012

The public is invited to all meetings, which will start at 9:30 a.m. at:

Joseph Kohn Training Center
130 Livingston Ave.
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901
(732) 937-6363

- January 27th
- April 13th
- June 8th
- October 12th
- December 7th

SRC meetings are held in compliance with Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and also are in compliance with the NJ Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10: 4-6.

Regional Offices and Facilities

For a complete description of CBVI services please visit the web site at <http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

153 Halsey Street, 6th Floor
P.O. Box 47017

Newark, NJ 07102

Phone: (973) 648-3333

Fax: (973) 648-7364

Vito DeSantis, Executive Director

vito.desantis@dhs.state.nj.us

John Walsh, Coordinator of VR Services

john.walsh@dhs.state.nj.us



NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE:

153 Halsey Street, 5th Floor

Newark, NJ 07101

Phone: (973) 648-2111 Fax: (973) 648-7674

Manager: Jose Morales

jose.morales@dhs.state.nj.us

CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE:

1510 Hooper Avenue, Suite 240

Toms River, NJ 08753

Phone: (732) 255-0720 Fax: (732) 255-0949

Manager: John Reiff

john.reiff@dhs.state.nj.us

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE (SRO):

2201 Rt. 38 East, Suite 600

Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Phone: (856) 482-3700 Fax: (856) 482 -3770

Assistant Manager: Jack Thompson

jack.thompson@dhs.state.nj.us

SRO - HAMMONTON OFFICE:

40 N White Horse Pike

Hammonton, NJ 08037-1894

Phone: (609) 704-6000 Fax: (609) 704-7109

DEAF-BLIND SERVICES:

153 Halsey Street, 6th Floor

Newark, NJ 07102

Phone: (973) 648-3549 Fax: (973) 648-2201

Acting Manager: John Walsh

john.walsh@dhs.state.nj.us

JOSEPH KOHN TRAINING CENTER:

130 Livingston Avenue

New Brunswick, NJ 08903

Phone: (732) 937-6363 Fax: (732) 247-6628

Manager: Donald Potenski

don.potenski@dhs.state.nj.us

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM:

Quakerbridge Plaza, Bldg 10 - Room 102,
Mercerville, NJ

P.O. Box 721, Trenton, NJ 08625

Phone: (609) 584-4905

Manager: John Klein

john.klein@dhs.state.nj.us

GEORGE F. MEYER INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE CENTER:

375 McCarter Highway

Newark, NJ 07114

Phone: (973) 648-2547

Manager: Amelia Ricciardi

amelia.ricciardi@dhs.state.nj.us