

LIONS LOW VISION CENTERS, INC.

Volume 1 Issue 9

April 2010

33 HIGHLAND ST., NEW BRITAIN, CT 06052
860-832-9601 800-676-5715 FAX 860-832-9604

Bristol Lions Low Vision Center

Four years ago, the Bristol Lions put out a call to community leaders in search of the club's next major project.

In a twist of fate moment, the local hospital president was searching for a community group to lead another public health initiative. When the Lions appeal reached his desk, the president knew he had an active group with whom the hospital could partner for the prevention and treatment of eye-related diseases. The Bristol Lions accepted the challenge and the Eye Care Project was formed.

A planning committee comprised of both Lions and hospital staff developed a master plan for the campaign. Through the hospital, local ophthalmologists were approached to lend their support for reduced costs to assisting needy residents with cataract surgery expenses. The hospital committed funding from their development foundation to support the activities of the project. Community informational sessions and Lions eye screenings helped to take the case to the public for sight

awareness.

The jewel of the Eye Care Project came in the proposal by the Lions to work in tandem with hospital officials to create the Bristol Lions Low Vision Center, one of thirteen such centers throughout Connecticut. Hospital officials quickly saw the need for and benefits of such a center for the aging Bristol populace. Hospital facilities and a therapist with low vision training were assigned to the Low Vision Center. As part of the hospital's rehabilitation facilities, the center enjoys not only modern and spacious quarters, but also clerical support from the hospital. The Bristol Lions Club took on the costs of creating and maintaining the inventory associated with the center. Since all devices provided by a low-vision therapist are offered without fee to the client, the club wanted to ensure that such assistance would always be available and within the club's annual budget is a line item for such expenses.

Current club activities have resulted in a substantial donation



by a Bristol resident, which supported the purchase of a number of magnifier readers for use both in the Bristol and New Britain centers. Through one of its newest members, the club is investigating handicap transportation services not only for the Bristol center, but to the New Britain center as well.

Despite a number of changes in the leadership within the hospital's structure, both Bristol Hospital and the Bristol Lions Club remain committed to the purpose and services of their low vision center.

Editor Note: The Bristol Low Vision Center is located at 975 Farmington Avenue (Rt.6) in Bristol and telephoning 860-589-3587 can make appointments.

Did you know ? :

- Please join us on Monday May 24, 2010, for our annual Lions Low Vision Center's Election of Officers and Directors Dinner at the Stonewell Restaurant in Farmington, CT. Social hour begins at 6:30 PM, dinner at 7:00 PM. The price of the buffet dinner is \$20.00 per person. Please make your dinner reservations with Cindy Cooper by e-mail at cindybcooper257@aol.com or by calling 860-627-9777.
- The sounds of Motown will fill the air over of the Berlin Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 12, 2010. Advanced tickets for the Berlin Music Festival are \$15. Tickets are available at the New Britain office, or at Kensington Opticians in Berlin. The Lions Low Vision Center receives funding from the Berlin Music Festival.
- Birdie's for Charity Donation at the Traveler's Championship - 100% of your donation comes back to the Lions Low Vision Center. Additional info being sent out soon.

Lions Low Vision Centers, Inc.

Lions Low Vision Center Funding:

Funding for the Lions Low Vision Centers, Inc. is provided by Lions Clubs of District 23B. Special fundraising events have been established by Lions Clubs in Berlin, East Windsor, Enfield, Plainville, Bristol, West Hartford, and Harwinton.

As a 501(c)3 organization, all donations are tax deductible. We are especially pleased to receive donations from individuals whose company has a matching gift program.

Please consider making a small donation to assist us in serving the visually impaired so that they can lead fuller and more productive lives.

Lions Low Vision Centers, Inc.

**33 Highland Street
New Britain, CT 06052
1-800-676-5715**

**Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation
103 Old Iron Ore Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002
1-800-676-5715**

**Sullivan Senior Center
Albert Street
Torrington, CT 06790
1-800-676-5715**

**Rehab Dynamics
975 Farmington Ave.
Bristol, CT 06010
1-860-589-3587**

Client Spotlights

Courtney, age 40, is a professional musician who lives in New Hartford along with her husband and their three children, ages 12, 13, and 15 years of age. Three years ago, Courtney was returning home from a concert in Syracuse.

The bus stopped at a rest area to allow folks to use the facilities and to stretch their legs. She quickly noticed there was a problem. She had never experienced a situation like this before. She had lost a portion of her peripheral vision. Courtney called her husband for help.

Courtney's husband met the bus and brought her to the nearest hospital. While in the emergency room, the medical staff performed numerous tests. The CAT scan result indicated the presence of a tumor. They recommended she see her ophthalmologist the next day. Her ophthalmologist studied the test results. He told Courtney that she had a tumor pressing

against her optic nerve. He said the tumor was inoperable.

She was devastated. As her condition worsened, she grew more depressed. Her doctor suggested she visit a new ophthalmologist in New York City. The doctor was renowned for her breakthrough robotic surgical techniques. After two hours of delicate surgery, a portion of the tumor was successfully removed. Pressure caused by the tumor permanently damaged her optic nerves. She lost 30% of her peripheral vision in her right eye and 50% of her peripheral vision in her left eye.

Courtney's family was very supportive. Her husband helped her as best as he could and her children also tried to be very helpful wherever they could. Nevertheless, Courtney was depressed. She was even losing interest in her cello. She stopped performing the music she had loved for thirty years.

Her local ophthalmologist suggested she visit a low vision professional. He gave her several options. One of his options was a visit to the Lions Low Vision Center. He said he had heard that they had a proven track record of helping those with vision loss or lost fields of vision.

Courtney spent about 90 minutes during her first visit. The Lions Low Vision Center provided her with several adaptive devices and hope. She walked in a very depressed person, but emerged with renewed hope. Subsequent visits have trained Courtney to use her remaining eyesight. The Lions Low Vision Center was not able to restore her lost sight, but it did restore her self-confidence and courage. At last report, Courtney was again performing with the orchestra.