This year, Low Vision Center Medical Director Dr. Gwen Sterns celebrated her 40th anniversary at ABVI. In recognition of her achievement, ABVI planted a tree in her honor in the Outdoor Mobility and Training Area.

Low vision has been a passion of Dr. Sterns since she was a medical student. While completing her medical degree in Ophthalmology at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, Dr. Sterns included low vision in her studies. At the time, few ophthalmologists focused on low vision as they felt their mission was only to save vision not to maximize any remaining vision.

In 1978, Dr. Sterns came to ABVI as the Medical Director of the Low Vision Center. One of her challenges was overcoming the reluctance of local eye doctors to make referrals to ABVI. They were concerned that ABVI would steal away their patients. Dr. Sterns was able to help them understand that ABVI’s Low Vision Clinic and vision rehabilitation services complemented what they did with their patients and patients would still need to see their eye doctor regularly. ABVI now counts some local eye doctors among our strongest supporters.

As Gidget Hopf, ABVI’s President and CEO, noted during the tree planting ceremony,
Your Change Changes Lives at Goodwill

You’ve heard it a million times — the idea that great things start out small. That’s certainly true with the Round Up at the Register program in our Goodwill stores. When the cashier asks you if you want to round up your total and donate $0.30, $0.15, etc., you might think, “How much good could that little bit of change do?” But when thousands of people do it every time they shop, it adds up.

In one year, the Round Up program raised over $174,000! So what does that mean for Goodwill?

Goodwill and its mission programs like ABVI, which empowers people with vision loss, and 2-1-1/LIFE LINE, which is a crisis and information/referral hotline available to everyone everyday, touch over 150,000 lives each year. Through our Good Neighbor Program we provide support to work-ready wardrobe programs so someone in need of interview attire can dress to impress and get the job that will change their life.

Our mission services do so much — from providing disaster recovery support to individuals and families affected by fire, flood, or other disasters to being there to listen when someone contemplating suicide needs someone to talk to. We provide training and jobs for people with barriers to independence. And for over 100 years we’ve provided people in our community who are blind or have low vision with the services and support they need to be self-sufficient and contribute to their families and the community.

Your change added to your total at the checkout supports all of this and much more. When you donate, shop and Round Up at the Register, you’re changing lives!

Dr. Sterns
continued from page 1

“One reason Gwen is so special to me and to ABVI is her desire to educate others. She is so passionate about Low Vision services and she has travelled all over the world teaching others about it.”

ABVI is lucky to have such a passionate advocate of Low Vision Services in Dr. Sterns.

Time to upgrade? Donate it to ABVI!

Just call our vehicle donation partner Charitable Auto Resources (CARS) at 1-877-537-5277. They’ll come to your location, help with any necessary paperwork, and take the vehicle(s) away. It’s a great way to support ABVI’s mission and to show how much you care about those in our community who are blind or visually impaired.
Our Wish List

Watch Display: $82
Knowing the time is fundamental to living independently. Therefore, a watch is one of the most requested items by people who are blind or visually impaired. We offer an array of talking, large print, and braille watches. We are in need of a watch display and storage cart in order to display our plethora of watches in a neat and organized fashion so that people can decide on the best fit for their time-telling needs.

Materials for Family Resource Center: $100-$500
Our Family Resource Center is being updated as we enhance our programming for children who are blind or visually impaired and their families. The Family Resource Center is where families of children who are blind or visually impaired can access information specific to the needs of their child, as well as have a quiet family-friendly place to meet with our Vision Rehabilitation staff. We are in need of items such as books and DVDs that will add to the training materials available for the lending library.

Equipment for Low Vision Exams
Because our service territory spans the Finger Lakes region, we provide low vision exams in locations outside of Monroe County to eliminate the need for people to travel to Rochester.

Sturdy Trial Frames: $500
These sturdy trial frames are used to determine the best prescription for eye glasses during a low vision exam.

Compact Wireless Color Scanner: $250
A scanner would enable our Low Vision Specialist who conducts the exams to scan documents directly into our electronic medical record from the remote locations.

Two iPad Pros with Case: $800 each
An iPad Pro with a 10 inch screen would enhance our ability to teach concepts, play games and other activities with preschoolers who are blind or visually impaired. The accompanying case can be adjusted so that the child can angle the iPad to the best position for their vision needs. In addition to providing vision rehabilitation services, we are also a leader in offering employment opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired across the organization. Within our manufacturing division, it is essential we record daily outputs for quality assurance and production analysis. Currently, we are using paper to record this information. This is inefficient and not accessible for those who are blind or visually impaired. An iPad would allow these employees to maintain this data independently and improve efficiencies by using technology designed for this purpose.

Pet Friendly Ice Melt: $1,000
Unlike other workplaces in our community, dogs work at ABVI as well as people. Of our 700 employees across ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes, 121 are blind or visually impaired. Many of these employees work with a dog guide. Like our human employees, our dog guide friends travel to work in the winter. Because rock salt can be very harmful to a dog’s paws, we would like to use pet friendly ice melt on the parking lot and sidewalks on our main campus.

Connect 12: $2,700
This electronic magnifier is a portable device that can enlarge printed materials or items such as photos or medication bottles. It can also be used to view objects in the distance. The Connect 12 is the latest generation of video magnifiers and features options that can be used by a student or older adult. We would like to have a Connect 12 available to demonstrate to individuals with low vision to help with their decision whether to purchase the device.
A Lifetime Dedication to Seniors

The Waldron Rise Foundation’s history began with the Halcyon Hill Foundation. Brad Whitman’s mother, Anne Whitman, formed the Halcyon Hill Foundation in 1992. However, the Halcyon Hill Foundation later dissolved. As a way to continue Anne’s compassionate, wise, and visionary understanding of community needs here in Monroe County, Brad and Michelle created the Waldron Rise Foundation in 2009.

The name of the foundation is credited to Brad’s great, great grandfather, Robert L. Waldron who was a Lieutenant in the 58th Virginia Infantry during the Civil War and was wounded many times, but would always rise to fight on. The Waldron Rise Foundation is dedicated to the social, health, and well-being of people of all ages in Monroe County. However, the senior population is near and dear to Brad and Michelle.

“I have always had a caring heart for the elderly,” says Michelle. “I worked at Hill Haven Nursing home back in 1976, when I was 16 years of age. Since then, I have been working with seniors in a medical office, adult day care, in home respite and hospice.”

She adds, “I have felt it was not only important that the elderly should live out their lives with dignity, love and respect, but it is just as important to help their families to understand their needs and help set up a safe long-term plan together. If their choice is to stay in their home, with assisted care, or assisted living facility or in a long-term facility, it is to be valued, as long as it is safe.”

Brad’s career also rooted his passion for our community. He says, “Medical Motors introduced me to a variety of people with a wide range of needs, something I would not had experienced had I not worked at Medical Motors Service.”

Since 2015, the Waldron Rise Foundation has supported ABVI’s New Skills, New Vision program — a group training program for those who are legally blind and over 55 years old. Most recently, the Waldron Rise Foundation supported the launch of Brighter Views, a similar training class for people who are visually impaired and not yet legally blind.

The Whitmans feel it is extremely important for seniors to have training available that is specific to their vision loss so they can remain safe and mentally healthy in their own home. This is one of the many reasons why the Waldron Rise Foundation believes this is a much-needed program in Monroe County for seniors who are blind or visually impaired.

The Whitmans shared, “Nonprofits need our financial support more than every these days, especially with the government providing less for community and nonprofit organizations. We feel very fortunate to be in a position to support such worthwhile programs in the Monroe County area.”

Thank you Brad and Michelle, and the Waldron Rise Foundation for your commitment to our mission!
Early Vision Screenings Prevent Potential Vision Issues

Did you know that one out of every four children under five years of age has an undetected vision problem? Fortunately, if detected early enough, most of these eye problems can be treated, and irreversible vision loss can be avoided. ABVI’s Early Vision Screening program provides vision screenings for children from six months old through kindergarten who attend Rochester’s ABC Head Start programs, private child care centers, and other agencies that serve at-risk families and children. For those children who do not pass their screening, we follow-up with their parents to help them understand the importance of their child having an eye exam for diagnosis and treatment. The contributions from the following donors to our Early Vision Screening program are paving the way for a bright future: Bruce B. Bates, Carolyn Friedlander, Eric Rennert, Nancy S. Robbins, and Rubens Family Foundation.

In 2017, 2,414 children received a vision screening through the program and 302 of those children did not pass their screening. This letter, from a mom of one of those children, shares their journey, and how without this program, her son would not be thriving!

Dear ABVI,

I am writing this letter on behalf of our family, and our gratitude for the ABVI Early Vision Screening program that was held at preschool.

When I was notified that our son did not pass his vision screening I was floored. I am that mother who has taken any necessary precaution and followed up on any recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our son has had vision screenings through his checkups, and my husband and I used to joke about his great vision because he would spot ants on the driveway, and notice any crumb on the floor. I never imagined that he would not have perfect vision.

I called the ophthalmologist and scheduled his appointment, in which it was confirmed exactly what the vision screening predicted – Astigmatism in both eyes. He was given glasses (which he was so excited came in his favorite color) and instructed to wear daily and would be seen again in 4 weeks to determine if more intervention would be necessary.

When we picked up the glasses, and he put them on for the first time, I will never forget what happened immediately following. He took a large gasp and said “Mommy! Look! I can see leaves on the trees!” In that moment, I was heartbroken that I never noticed he had vision issues. The issues we had with his writing and reading in school and at home improved almost immediately. His attention and love for doing handwriting and reading increased because, as he says, “it’s so easy to see now”. I can only imagine how frustrated he felt on a daily basis because he was struggling, but unable to express why he was, and did not know any different.

Since his follow up appointment, he continues to do well and loves having glasses. Even after a few short weeks, it’s hard to remember what he looked like before them. Without the ABVI vision screening, we never would have known of his astigmatism, and that if unresolved with glasses, he could have ended up with permanent damage. I never saw any red flags. I felt his baseline vision was fine because he could identify what I thought was appropriate.

Whenever someone mentions his glasses, I quickly tell them that it was because of the ABVI Early Vision Screening that was held at his preschool, and how much it has impacted him. He has become more confident in his educational aspects of his preschool and as a parent, there is nothing more important than seeing my child become more confident and enjoying his life every day.

Thank you again for the service ABVI has provided.
A memorial or honorary gift is a wonderful way to celebrate special occasions, honor a loved one, or pay tribute to the memory of family members or friends. Many generous people have found a way to express their caring spirit while helping to ensure the success of ABVI. As a thank you for your gift, ABVI will list your name and the names of those who you are honoring in our newsletter. We’ll also send a note acknowledging your gift according to your wishes. For more information about making a memorial or honorary gift donation, please contact ABVI’s Development Department at (585) 697-5711. Thank you to the following friends who have made tribute contributions from February 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018.

**InSights Memorial and Honorary Gifts**

**Honorariums**

*In honor of ABVI volunteer drivers*
- Mary Ellen Warner

*In honor of Rose Cheswell*
- Bernadine Robertson

*In honor of Mary Lou Kuntz*
- Nikki B. Llewellyn

*In honor of Cathy Schaffron*
- Cleve Killingsworth and Daren Chentow

*In honor of Gwen K. Sterns, M.D. – 40th Anniversary as ABVI’s Medical Director*
- Alexander Eye Associates
- Downtown's Vision Care
- Dennis and Barbara Asselin
- William Brandt
- Olga Lucia Cardenas
- Maria Cassetta
- Steven and Mary Ching
- Katherine Ciesinski
- Elizabeth C. Ernisse
- Steven and Diane Feldon
- Allison Ford and Timothy Abbamonte
- Carolyn and Roger Friedlander
- Evelyn Garufi
- Dorothy Green
- Alan H. Gruber, M.D.
- Omar and Andrea Hanuch
- Janice Hennon
- Dr. Marvin J. Hoffman
- Gidget and John Hopf
- Michele A. Jamison, M.D. and Walter D. France III
- Jeanne W. Krautwurst
- Dr. Fred Kunken
- Michele A. Lagana, O.D. and Ian Cox, O.D.
- Hobart and Elinor Lerner
- Lisa Marino
- Daniel Meyers
- Peter J. Micca
- Lorraine Northrup
- Christine and Barry Platt
- Marilisa Post
- Dr. and Mrs. Saul Presberg, M.D.
- Ying Qian M.D.
- Barbara Rafoth
- Ronald and Krista Reed
- Steven and Leslie Rose
- Robert and Heidi Ryan
- Cathy and Michael Schaffron
- Tracy L. Schleyer
- David Siegel
- Margery B. Sterns
- Adam Sterns
- Elizabeth Stevens, O.D.
- Edward Tanner III
- Derek Tenhoopen, M.D.
- Katherine White-Hitchcock and Richard Hitchcock
- Balazs Zsentis and Annamarie Kantor

*In honor of Joseph J. Istvan’s retirement*
- Tracy L. Schleyer

**Memorials**

*In memory of Merle H. Arnold*
- Cornerstone Eye Associates

*In memory of James W. Beisheim*
- Cornerstone Eye Associates

*In memory of Eugene Bucknam*
- Barbara Bucknam

*In memory of William F. Ebner*
- Chet Colombino
- Maryann Colombino
- Shirley Rolfe
- Dorothy Sozio

*In memory of Eli Eckman*
- Julie and Karl Marsiglio

*In memory of Jeannetta Edwards*
- Cornerstone Eye Associates

*In memory of Rose Mary Ferrara Gallo*
- Michael Anderson
- Vivian Condello
- University of Rochester Midwifery Group

*In memory of Eugene Feuerstein*
- Anne Ciccarelli
In memory of Wendy Forman
Lorie Bateman
Janice and Kenneth Blackman
John and Bev Engels
Gary and Naida Mables
Carolyn and David Reville
Marlene and Calvin Treese
From the Employees of the Town of Walworth

In memory of Francis Kearns
Cheryle Baldwin

In memory of Arline C. Knaub
Patricia A. and Tom Maier

In memory of Alice Lapa
Kim E. Pelletier

In memory of Paul McKinnon
Harry R. Ackley
Daniel and Amy Ackley
David and Ruth Slocum

In memory of Joseph McShea
Kristine Cocilova
Robert and Mary Katherine Finnerty
Stephen Graham
Raymond and Anita Hawkins
Donna Klein
Patricia McShea
Thomas E. McShea
Angelina Musso
Patrick O’Gorman
Kimberly B. Rooney
Cheryl Santore
Tony and Ellen Saporito
Francis and Norma Stefano
Carol and Richard Stehn

In memory of Helen Mead
Anne Christman

In memory of William Stalcoskie
Debby and Walt Ayer
Josephine Carra
Paul Casterline
Berneda and Roy Fisher
Frank Lembo
Laurie and Bill Pearson
Lynn and Bill Spalty
Susan Stalcoskie

In memory of Akeata Terry
Etta Terry

In memory of Jean Whitford
David Buschner
David DeFelice
Jeff and Valerie Schmarje

In memory of Helen Winzer
Nancy Premo
Don’t need your IRA minimum required distribution this year?

If you’re 70½ or older, your charitable giving just got easier!

Congress has permanently extended the provision that allows you to make a tax-free gift from your IRA to ABVI-Goodwill. The gift counts as your minimum required distribution, which means you don’t have to pay income tax on money you don’t need—and you make a meaningful gift to support a mission you believe in.

To make a distribution from your IRA to ABVI, your IRA administrator will need our address: ABVI, 422 S. Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY, 14620; and our Federal ID#: 16-0743906. IRA administrators don’t always include donors’ names on distribution checks. If you’re planning to make an IRA distribution gift to ABVI, please let us know in advance so that we’ll be able to identify your contribution. Thank you!

If you would like more information contact Tracy Schleyer, CFRE, Vice President of Development at 585-697-5780 or tschleyer@goodwillfingerlakes.org