Seeing Was Believing for Donor Bob Bleier

It was a powerful experience for Bob Bleier when he spent some time with kids in the Summer Sizzle program. Summer Sizzle teaches kids with visual impairments life skills and social behaviors.

As a donor and Development Advisory Committee member, Bob was very familiar with ABVI’s mission, but it was a whole new experience to see the mission in action.

“There was one boy named Tommy. We talked about football and food. The children were making lunch and Tommy loves food, so making a sandwich was an adventure for him. His favorite part was putting on lots of mayo,” says Bob.

While this was Bob’s first time sitting in on an ABVI program, he’s not new to ABVI. Bob’s journey began through his membership in the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), an association of financial professionals. After taking a tour of the agency, he successfully advocated on ABVI’s behalf to the MDRT Foundation for a grant.

During his time with the kids of Summer Sizzle, Bob could see why it’s such an important program for children who are blind or visually impaired.

“Tommy’s confidence in everything – talking sports with me, making his own lunch, interacting with his friends – shows how important ABVI is in the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired; especially for children who are blind or visually impaired,” says Bob, adding “ABVI gives people confidence and hope to not let their vision issues stand in their way.”
The Kid’s Got IT: Charlie Ingoglia’s ABVI Journey

Charlie Ingoglia came to ABVI as a child, participating in children’s programs for kids who are blind or visually impaired.

Laughing, he remembers thinking a trip to a laundromat was pretty cool. They also had lunch at Bennigan’s and other group activities. For Charlie, the thing that made the biggest impact on him was being around other kids who had similar visual impairments. It was an experience he could not get anywhere else.

When Charlie got a little older, he began working in one of our Goodwill stores as a clothing grader, sorting out the clothing that could go out on the floor for sale to raise funds to support our mission. He worked for Goodwill for two summers.

Then he was able to get a position with ABVI that synched with his growing interest in technology. By this time, Charlie was writing computer programs and building computers. Through a co-op opportunity, he worked on ABVI’s IT help desk, assisting staff with computer issues. He was also going to school to get a degree in Information Technology with a focus on web design and learning and performance technology.

In 2008, Charlie became a full-time ABVI employee as a Help Desk Analyst. Soon he started doing more computer repair, managing servers and network equipment. While Charlie didn’t have a specific background in these areas, he says he was able to learn along the way.

“If Charlie cannot solve a problem, he will not rest until he finds a solution. He never gives up and will work a problem until he finds an answer, even if that means staying up until 3:00 a.m. I think that is what I admire most about him,” says Lisa Jackel, Assistant Director of Information Technology.

Charlie’s favorite part of working at ABVI is that there is always something new to learn and always a new project.

“I love not knowing what the day will bring,” says Charlie.
Our Wish List

The kindness and generosity of our donors help us to offer the best and most up-to-date services possible. The following is a list of much needed items that are not covered by ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes’ budget. To donate funds to purchase any of these items, or to donate the items themselves, please contact Sarah Favro at sfavro@goodwillfingerlakes.org or (585) 327-5526.

**Watch Display: $50**
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.

**Gift Cards for Career Closet: $50 each**
Located at three of our Goodwill stores, the Goodwill Career Closets are a resource for individuals entering the workforce for the first time, or the first time in a long time, to gear up with the appropriate interview or work clothing. We are in need of gift cards from retailers to purchase items such as work boots, safety glasses, or irregular-sized clothing that are not readily available through our Goodwill donated goods.

**Items for Children and Family Program**
Our program has expanded and now includes weekly activities for the children and their families, more resources for parents through our lending library, and trainings and support groups for parents are being planned. Growing up blind or visually impaired can be challenging for a child, and raising that child can be overwhelming for parents. We are here to show our families that everyday life can be fun and that even though things may have to be done differently, anything is possible!

- Blue Ray/DVDs with audio description: $20 each
- DVD/Blue Ray Player with Wi-Fi: $75
- Materials for Family Resource Center/Lending Library: $100-$500
- Beeping Easter Eggs: $200

**Talking Color Identifier: $180**
The Colorino is a portable adaptive device that aids people who are blind or visually impaired by speaking aloud an object’s color. This device would assist our manufacturing employees who are blind or visually impaired to be able to properly identify the colors of products and supplies.

**Programmable Microwave: $300**
Our Adaptive Skills Training Center contains a variety of appliances that are used during individual training sessions and for programs for children, teens, and seniors. The appliances are used to practice adaptive skills as well as to demonstrate how these appliances can be marked for use by someone who is blind or visually impaired. We need update our microwave to a more powerful one with additional features such as programmable and one touch buttons.

**Items for Work Experience Training: $400**
People who participate in our Workforce Development programming receive comprehensive training to prepare them for a job or career. Prior to securing employment, a participant may complete a Work Experience to develop necessary skills needed for a particular job. We need supplies that a participant can use to learn specific tasks to be prepared for a Work Experience.

**Glass Display Cases for Goodwill Stores: $400 each**
Our Goodwill operation receives a variety of household items from our generous donors. Some of these items such as collectables, dishware, and high-end jewelry need to be displayed in glass cases to assure these items are visible while protecting them from breakage and theft. We are in need of 10 of these display cases.
ABVI President and Board Chair Honors

ABVI’s annual President and Chairman’s Lunch was held in early September and is an event where we say thank you to the very special individuals, foundations, and companies who have generously and consistently supported ABVI and the work we do to provide programs, services, and employment opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Our speaker this year was Dirk Hightower, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Children’s Institute. We also presented Community Partner Awards to Dr. Christine Platt and to Greg Lund.

Hightower spoke about GROW-Rochester, a comprehensive initiative spearheaded by the Children’s Institute that integrates screenings for vision, hearing, dental health, language, and speech for three-year-olds. ABVI is a proud part of this initiative.

Dr. Platt has volunteered through ABVI’s Project Eye Care program, providing free eye exams to people in Rochester who lack comprehensive vision health insurance. She then became interested in the Early Vision Screening program. In 2017, ABVI screened 2,414 children, of which 304 failed the screening and were referred for an exam. Screening thousands of children a year is daunting. Having a volunteer like Dr. Platt makes a difference.

In Brockport Lions Club member Greg Lund, ABVI has a powerful crusader for the causes championed by Lions Clubs International—preventing blindness, restoring eyesight and improving eye health. In 2010, Greg and another Lions Club member were instrumental in securing a grant of $75,000 from Lions Clubs International Foundation for ABVI’s capital campaign for our new Vision Rehabilitation Center. Also on behalf of the Children and Family Program, Greg, as an employee of Enterprise Car Sales, obtained a grant from Enterprise Holdings Foundation. He has been a true friend to us and constantly seeks to promote our mission.
A Letter of Thanks for ABVI’s Dedicated Staff

July 17, 2018

Dear Gidget Hopf and Tracy Schleyer:

Thank you for your recent letter of thanks and membership to the Loyalty Society for five years of contributions. I wish it could be more. It has been that long that my Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) has gradually gotten worse and I have needed help from your agency. I would be unable to purchase some of the life-changing items available from your staff. They walk on water!

They have made it possible for me to be independent at almost 88. This is very important to me and I’m sure other clients you help.

I could not let this gesture on your part go unthanked by me. Your interest and access have changed my life.

I hope you can take time out to enjoy the summer.

Sincerely,
Joyce A. Barnard
Memorial and Honorary Gifts

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 July 1, 2018 through October 31, 2018.

HONORARIUMS

In honor of Bliss Clark
Kathleen Horne

In honor of Mary Carol Graby, O.D.
Phyllis Ciaccio

In honor of Jennifer Lake & Family
Heather Starcher

In honor of Christine C. Platt, M.D., 2018 Community Partner Award Recipient
Steven and Diane Feldon

In honor of Rudolph W. Warren, 2018 Visionary Award Recipient
Carolyn and Sam Bick

MEMORIALS

In memory of Elizabeth M. Blitz
Robert E. Blitz

In memory of Ann Bosco
Dave and Barb Polito

In memory of Eugene Bucknam
Calvin and Joan Bucknam

**(Insights 2018 Issue #2 correction)**

In memory of Jean Cummings
Nancy Premo

In memory of Patricia E. Graves
Carole Sutphen

In memory of Frances Kearns
Diana M. Cort

In memory of Mary Lou Knapp
Nancy Premo

In memory of Anne LaPiana
Pamela and Carl Brant
Alphonse and Geraldine Scribani
Diane Starr

In memory of Jarret T. Lobb
Charles Brinkman, Jr. & The Dayton Foundation

In memory of Helen Mead
Anne Christman

In memory of Lois Miller
Nancy Premo

In memory of Thomas P. Ross
Nancy Premo

In memory of Elaine Welty
Edward and Judith Keil

In memory of Bertha White
Marilyn F. Sheehan

In memory of Helen Witzmann
Nancy Premo

Wheels out of fashion?
Giving never goes out of style.
Donate your car, boat, or RV today!
Goodwill of the Finger Lakes has launched a new website: http://www.goodwillfingerlakes.org. The new website combines the best parts of the www.SeeGreatThings.org and the www.GoodwillFingerLakes.org sites to provide users with an updated, mobile-friendly interface. In addition to an updated Goodwill store listing, news, and blog posts, the new Goodwill of the Finger Lakes website offers ABVI donors the ability to give financial donations online through a secure portal. We hope you check us out online!

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
It has been said that rare is the person who regrets having been truly generous or thoughtful, and I believe that to be true. More often, well-intentioned people are sorry for not having done more to help others while they still could. I understand that passing down your treasure for your family and loved ones is always the first priority. In addition, many individuals also provide for the charities that they deeply care for. We are always humbled and grateful to the many individuals who include ABVI in their estate plans. Have you considered how you want to hand down to the next generation, whether that be to individuals in your family or individuals in our community who would benefit from your caring thoughtfulness?

Your bequest to ABVI will help so many, such as:
- a child with retinopathy learn to play safely just like their sighted peers in our Children’s Center, or;
- a parent with retinitis pigmentosa learn the skills needed to stay in the workforce through our Employment and Technology Program, or;
- a grandparent with macular degeneration learn to bake with a grandchild using techniques learned from our Vision Rehabilitation Therapists

If you are interested in making a bequest to ABVI and would like to become a member of our Foresight Circle, please contact me at (585) 697-5780 or tschleyer@goodwillfingerlakes.org.