ABVI is Family for Walter Chatman

Walter has retinitis pigmentosa. It began as tunnel vision and night blindness and then his central vision started to go. Now he can only see shadows of people.

Walter’s grandfather had retinitis pigmentosa. So did his dad. They both worked at ABVI. So Walter knew of ABVI, but didn’t really know what it was all about.

But after getting married, he realized that he needed a way to support his family.

He had no computer skills, so ABVI gave him computer training and training on adaptive technology. And he got a job at ABVI in their Contact Center, where he now works.

Then in June of 2009, Walter was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin’s lymphoma. He had to stop working so he could go through cancer treatment.

Walter says, “ABVI was there for me again. My coworkers were calling me for updates every week. Sending cards. Just being like a family to me – my

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ABVI Helps Kids Climb Ladder to Success

Summer has come and gone but the memories made during this year’s Ladder to Success program will last for a long time!

Participants ranged from 11 to 21 years old with varied career interests. Despite these differences, together they prepared meals, practiced speaking in front of the group, considered how their skills and interests might lend themselves to specific paths, and explored job-readiness topics.

They also visited the Rochester International Airport, Intergrow Greenhouses, Panera Bread restaurant, the Fairfield Inn, RIT, and SUNY Brockport.

On those outings, they heard from hiring managers on what they expect from employees, learned about an array of jobs, and got a glimpse of the complexities of life on a college campus.

Thank you to the following donors for investing in the future!
Camp Smile, Inc.
Macy’s
M&T Bank Charitable Fund
The John Ben Snow Memorial Trust
Thomson Reuters

And when I see the people at ABVI working hard to attain their goals, it pushes that much harder to work on mine. No one at ABVI is making excuses like ‘I can’t do that because I’m blind.’"

For Walter, ABVI is definitely about empowerment.

“There’s that old saying that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, then he can feed himself for a lifetime. That’s what ABVI does for those of us who are blind or visually impaired. They teach us so we are empowered to do things ourselves.”

ABVI is Family
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colleagues, my supervisors, even the CEO were checking in to see how I was doing. Luckily, I beat cancer and I was able to return to work at ABVI.”

According to Walter, working at ABVI is a constant source of inspiration for him. “The people I work with who are blind or visually impaired-they don’t let anything stop them. That inspiration has carried over into my music. I play in multiple bands. I record.
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: $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.

DVDs for Children: $100
What better way to spend a rainy afternoon than watching a movie? On occasion, snow or rain keeps the children who attend our day camps inside. We would like to update our library of movies for the children’s program.

Furnishings for Tranquility Room: $500
Each day, our 2-1-1/ LIFE LINE Telecounselors are saving lives. Whether they are finding beds at a homeless shelter for a young mother and her children, referring a senior to their nearest food pantry, or stabilizing a teen who is considering suicide, our Telecounselors are here to help, 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. As you can imagine, these conversations, which can range from a few minutes to an hour, can be emotionally and physically taxing for our Telecounselors. We want to create a space for the Telecounselors to destress and re-energize for the next person in need. This room will include a tranquility fountain, soft lighting, small tables, and comfortable seating.

Two iPad Pros with Cases: $800 each
With an iPad Pro, children who are blind can use the Voiceover feature built into the device to hear what is on the screen and children with low vision can use Zoom to enlarge what is on the screen. 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.

Equipment for Low-Vision Exams
Because our service territory spans the Finger Lakes region, we provide low-vision exams in other locations 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.
A Donor’s Journey

Tim Thomas began his relationship with ABVI as a vendor in 1999. But his relationship with us has grown from vendor, to donor, to Development Advisory Committee (DAC) member, to Chairman of our annual Visionary Gala.

Tim sat down with us to talk about his evolution with ABVI. This is an abridged version of that interview (Responses have been edited for clarity). For more of Tim’s chat with us, visit our YouTube channel at http://bit.ly/GoodwillYouTube

Q: Talk to us about the evolution of your role with ABVI.

Tim Thomas: I was working with ABVI through my business and as time went on, I found that there were other ways I could get involved.

First, I attended the Galas. I think probably 2001 was the first one I went to. I got a chance to hear some of the testimonials, to hear how people’s lives had been changed because of the good things that ABVI does. And because of that, I wanted to become more and more involved. I’ve worked with not-for-profits for many years and I’ve been blessed with a good life. I feel that it’s my responsibility to give back as much as possible whenever I can. So I did more things with ABVI. I joined the Development Advisory Committee. As time went on I thought, “Maybe I can help in some different kinds of ways. Maybe I can get some sponsorship. Maybe I can get some auction items.”

So I became the co-chair of the Gala. Because I work with clients nationally, I hear what they’re doing with their Galas and ways they’ve been able to raise more money. I try to bring these new ideas to our Gala.

Q: Why do you enjoy supporting ABVI?

Tim Thomas: Back in high school a very good friend of mine had diabetes. He was an athlete, one of your high school jocks. I never saw something like vision loss in his future. He also received a debilitating eye injury in a basketball game. By his mid-twenties, his vision started deteriorating. And now he’s totally blind. But he doesn’t let it get him down. He’s waterskied. He’s played basketball. He actually ran with the torch for the Olympics for a quarter mile in Niagara Falls. To see him do these things is truly an inspiration. And to see how people who are blind or visually impaired can work with organizations like ABVI and how they can make their lives better also really inspires me. That’s why ABVI has been one of my nonprofits that I love to donate to and volunteer for.

Q: What would you want people to know about ABVI?

Tim Thomas: When you go on their website, you see that they do so many things, from their employment programs to 2-1-1/LIFE LINE. They think outside the box and because of that they can help a lot of people in our area.

Hear Tim talk about hitchhiking to see CEO Gidget Hopf’s family and how doing standup comedy relates to fundraising.
We’re All A Twitter About Our New Group!

Goodwill of the Finger Lakes and ABVI have started an Emerging Leaders Board to serve as a platform to engage emerging leaders in the community. Board members use their unique knowledge and skills to enhance ABVI/Goodwill of the Finger Lakes’ position and visibility within the community.

Since much of this board’s communication will involve social media, we asked the members of this new group, “In 140 characters (the length of a tweet), tell us why you want to be involved with ABVI and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes.”

“I wanted to be part of ABVI/Goodwill of the Finger Lakes because of the impact felt by communities served. I wholeheartedly believe in the mission and look forward to giving back.”

– Kate Black

“I wanted to join this ABVI group to engage with and help my community. I’ve learned about the resources of ABVI and want to help spread the word of their work.”

– Maria Nicole Chilas

“I wanted to be a part of ABVI/Goodwill because their services represent a positive turning point in countless lives.”

– Robert Coughlin

“To be a part of a team within our local community that is able to help change others’ lives for the better.”

– Jasmine Disch

“As an avid (weekly!) thrifter at Goodwill, I use my website and social media to show my great finds, while knowing my purchase supports ABVI/Goodwill. I believe in Goodwill!”

– Sarah Pavia

“ABVI is a great opportunity to give back to the community and be a part of something on the ground floor.”

– Alexis Thomas

“I wanted to become professionally involved with a local non-profit. I continue to be amazed with the great work ABVI/Goodwill does & the number of lives touched daily.”

– Sarah Vollo
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 11, 2017 through October 15, 2017.

Honorariums

In honor of Janie and Adam Pehur
Eugene and Barbara Basch

In honor of A. Gidget Hopf
Barbara and Jerry Underhill
*Correction – originally published InSights Newsletter – Issue 2, 2017

In honor of Tracy Schleyer
Peggy Savlov

Memorials

In memory of Douglas Murrell
Christopher and Debra Russell

In memory of Eli Eckman
Karen M. Schuhle-Williams

In memory of Geraldine Lynch
Armida Magee

In memory of Jarret J. Lobb
Clayton and Susan Cloen

In memory of Jeffrey R. Kilker
Donna M. Kilker

In memory of John C. Gipner
Robert and Winnie Bickel
Dorothy Colwell
Gail Gipner
Joan Gourley
Nancy Grouse
Horst and Brenda Gross
Frank and Margaret Herron
Sandy Lerner
Mark Lessard
Mary McAmmond
Betty Middlebrook
Catherine Miller
Jean O’Donnell
Ted and Kathryn Parcel
Gary and Michelle Prok
Betty Schaeffer
Marilyn G. Scott
Richard and Martha Strebel
Giner VanderMeid

In memory of Mary Verna
Kendra and Roger Tuttle

In memory of Ruth M. Heinrich
Van and Kathy Nettin

In memory of Susan M. Ives
Gidget and John Hopf

In memory of Tamara Bilyk
Maureen and Bohdan Baran
Oksana Carpenter
Simon and Eileen Conway
Mary Ann Duffy
Jay Westendorf

Your Mission:
To Save the Date
March 10, 2018
Hyatt Regency Rochester
Support ABVI & Save

As the end of the year approaches, I want to remind you that Congress has provided TWO important charitable giving incentives that can help you support your favorite charities, including ABVI, while also saving on taxes! It is a classic win-win scenario.

Incentive One: IRA Charitable Rollover
If you are 70½+ years old, you can transfer up to $100,000 each year directly from your IRA to ABVI. This gift counts towards your required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA and DOES NOT need to be reported as income on your income tax return (however, you do not receive an income tax charitable deduction for your gift). This is a great reason to consider using your IRA (instead of cash) to make a charitable gift.

Incentive Two: Gifts of Appreciated Stock
If you own appreciated stock or mutual funds, you can donate them to ABVI prior to year-end. What’s in it for you? You can take a charitable deduction (for an amount equal to the value of the stock on the day we receive it), and you avoid any capital gains tax that you would have paid had you sold the stock. In this way, the tax savings can be MUCH more significant than with a gift of cash.

For more information on these giving options, you can always contact me directly at (585) 697-5780 or tschleyer@goodwillfingerlakes.org.

P.S. – Brokers and IRA administrators don’t always include donors’ names on stock transfers and distribution checks. If you’re planning to make a gift to ABVI using these incentives, please let us know in advance so that we’ll be able to identify your gift. And please let us know if you want your gift used for a particular purpose. Thank you!

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired - Goodwill of the Finger Lakes
President’s Council
Six outstanding individuals were recently welcomed into the President’s Council. This group has had an unwavering commitment to our mission over a long period of time. They each have had an outstanding record of service and support of the missions of the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes.

Congratulations to our inaugural group!
Joseph C. Briggs
John C. Buttrill
Steven E. Feldon, M.D., M.B.A.
Shirley E. Skinner
Rudolph W. Warren
Joyce Zimowski
Congratulations!

The Association of Fundraising Professionals, NY Genesee Valley Chapter, recently honored two of ABVI’s generous corporate donors with awards highlighting their charitable giving to the Greater Rochester community.

ConServe
2017 Outstanding Corporation

Pictured (l to r): ConServe VP of Human Resources George Huyler, Maureen Davitt, ConServe President Mark Davitt, ABVI’s Sarah Favro and Tracy Schleyer, and ConServe employee Marissa Andris.

Smola Consulting
2017 Outstanding Small Business

Pictured (l to r): Steve Smola, Owner of Smola Consulting with Susan Holliday, former President and Publisher of the Rochester Business Journal, Inc.