



AROUND THE CENTER

CICBVI NEWS January, 2022

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Paula Balistreri, Editor

NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNINGS!

Yes, there are dozens of New Year greetings out there that pretty much say the same old thing: time for starting over, new outlooks, new resolutions, etc. etc. But, here at the Center, it is really true! We are looking forward to exciting things in 2022 and here is just a sampling of what 2021 brought us and what to expect in 2022:

NEW FACES: we have had many new patrons join our ranks this year and anticipate many more. New patrons include any blind or visually impaired person for whom we have provided services. We have welcomed several at our events, with others getting personalized service either at the Center, in their home or over the phone. We also welcomed several new volunteers this year who have added so much to our activities!

NEW ACTIVITIES: While we are not on a weekly social event schedule, for a number of reasons, the social events we have had have been extraordinary. We have had a band play, trivia games, home-cooked food (including an introduction to vegan tortilla soup, which was delicious), outstanding conversation and connection between patrons, themed events and more. Our field trips included a baseball

game, a trip to Tanner's Orchard, thrift stores and Washing Square shopping, as well as new restaurants along with our familiar favorites. We also greatly expanded our White Cane Day recognition with an event at Tower Park that included a DJ, White Cane demonstrations, food trucks and more. We look forward to this event growing every year.

NEW SERVICES: In spite of pandemic concerns, we have been pleased to provide white canes, mobility training, nutrition supplement in the form of food boxes, social activities, field trips, technology training and more during 2021. We have increased and improved our social media presence, both on our web site as well as our Facebook page and Instagram. We introduced Technology Tuesday this year on our You Tube channel. Be on the lookout for expansion of these services in 2022! It's the wave of the future!

NEW OUTLOOK: We have increased our visibility and "presence" in the community by leaps and bounds. Paula B spoke about the Center at multiple Lions' Clubs around the area – with more scheduled for 2022 – and that resulted in new connections as well as donations and support for the Center. She also was interviewed by Christine Zak on WTVP-TV about White Cane Day and the work of the CICBVI. Felisa participated in trade shows where she was able to share brochures and make connections with the community. She also distributed information and introduced the center to area eye doctors as well as potential philanthropic partners such as South Side Mission, Neighborhood House and more.

An important and major highlight of the year is our new connection with the Rockford Sight and Hearing Center – because this new connection

is opening more doors and providing more opportunity to serve our patrons. This came about as the Rockford center was seeking ways to satisfy the requirements of an Illinois State grant. After several meetings and much conversation we have begun the process to work together – resulting in a wonderful opportunity to increase the services provided to our patrons while also meeting the IL State grant accountability. Please be sure to look for the article in this newsletter about the January event that is planned to kick this off.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the support and generosity of our donors. We had a hugely successful Annual Banquet, an amazing Golf Outing and a delightful “Dinner in the Dark.” Board member Darlene Violet took the lead in for the Banquet and Dinner and truly is the super hero that made them successful. Kurt Norris took over the Golf Outing and did a superb job in organizing and making it a fun event. A big thank you to them and their committees.

We also were supported with unique gifts this year. We were gifted the funds to purchase a sorely needed embosser. We were the recipient of gifts from several charitable organizations as well as, once again, receiving huge support from the Uftring Ambassadors. We also were blessed to be named as a recipient of a bequest from the Alberta O’Shaughnessy estate along with all the individual donors who have supported us over the year, either with monetary gifts, or gifts of their time and talents. It is so very much appreciated by everyone connected with the CICBVI. Thank you.

Wishing you a New Year full of treasured memories and new beginnings! - Paula B

INTRODUCING THE ROCKFORD SIGHT & HEARING CENTER

As you know, representatives from the CICBVI visited the RS&H Center last fall to learn more about what they do and how we can work together to provide more services in our area. We are very pleased to announce that we will have a kick-off lunch for you to all learn what they do (and what we will be doing together) on January 26th. This is an interactive event with RS & H sharing information about all things blindness and low vision. The event will focus on better understanding services that are available to our patrons – most at NO COST! Information on Orientation & Mobility training, low vision aids and devices (with the possibility of some free samples being given out) daily living skills training and all sorts of tips and tricks on how to be as independent as possible in all areas of your life. Please don't think just because you have been a patron for years and years you won't find something new here – because you WILL! We need you to attend so you can be good ambassadors for the Center as well as be able to take advantage of new benefits. As usual, transportation will be provided and, of course, there will be a great lunch. You will need to get your reservations in a little earlier than usual – please call by January 14th if at all possible. You won't want to miss this!

IN MEMORIAM

The Center experienced a significant loss with the passing of Board Member and long-time patron, Leia Stewart on December 21st. Her services were held December 28th and several patrons attended as well as our Board President, Kurt Norris, CICBVI staff, Felisa Durr and Paula Balistreri, volunteers Mike Waldrin, Jamie Lang, Mike Schmied, and Earl & Linda Kalb. Leia will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CENTER

January 12 is a Teddy Bear Picnic lunch at the Center. Please bring your favorite stuffed animal and your appetite.

January 18th – NOTE THIS IS A TUESDAY – we will celebrate the Chinese New Year with dinner at the center. When you call in your reservation, please mention your favorite kind of Chinese food and we will try to have it included as a choice. It goes without saying there will be fortune cookies for everyone!

January 26th – lunch with the Rockford Sight and Hearing Center – learn all about this exciting new partnership!

DATE TO BE DETERMINED:

You may know Evan Schwerbrock from previous times he has worked with patrons. After developing side effects from LHON in 2014, he earned his Master's Degree in Kinesiology and became a certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. His passion for fitness led him to compete in strongman events and he won the title of Illinois' Strongest Man in the 242# weight class in 2019. In 2020 he founded the Cane & Able Fitness organization in order to produce relevant fitness content for the visually impaired world. To date, you can visit caneandablefitness.com to find dozens of free articles and hundreds of informative posts. He currently does consultation work with the visually impaired and we are looking forward to scheduling a date for him to visit us at the Center.

BOOK REVIEW

Patron Deanna Bruce loves to read. You may recall that she also loves to write and has successfully written a children's book that is available on Amazon. She has agreed to share book reviews with us from time to time which, if you love to read, you can appreciate how nice it is to get good book referrals. Please note that all the books Deanna reviews here are available as audio books. Enjoy!

“The Ladies’ Man” – by Lorraine Heath. Deanna gives this book a 5 out of 5 stars. The story is about the Daltrey family who live in the heart of Texas. Each time a Daltrey turns 20, their grandmother assigns a task they are to complete within a year to get a great prize. The task is always designed to build character and provide life lessons along the way, sometimes about love. The grandchildren are not to tell anyone outside the family about the task, which can lead to some awkward moments. This book is an enjoyable light-hearted romance.

“Cross Her Heart” by Melinda Leigh – Deanna also gives this book a 5 out of 5 star rating. The plot revolves around homicide detective, Bree Taggard, who finds herself investigating her sister's murder. During the course of the investigation, Bree is forced to bring up her suppressed memories of her parents' murder/suicide that happened 25 years previously. Meanwhile, she tries to clear her brother-in-law's name after the evidence just doesn't add up.

Speaking of books – the Center has a lot of audio books and CD's for you to borrow – just give us a call

IMPORTANT DATES!

- January 5 – Happy Birthday to Paul White
- January 9 – Happy Birthday to Tom Vogel and Becky Williams
- January 11 – CICBVI Board Meeting at Illinois Eye Center
- January 11 – Happy Birthday to Dennis Jurewicz
- January 12 – Teddy Bear Picnic Lunch at the Center – be sure to call in your reservations and bring your favorite stuffed animal
- January 14th – reservations due to RS&H event on January 26th
- January 15th – Patron Gayle Workman will be speaking at the Lakeview Library about Braille to interested students
- January 18th – Chinese New Year Celebration dinner at the Center – be sure to call in your reservations
- January 18th – Happy Birthday to Alice Lopez
- January 19th -21st – MW Food Bank pick up and deliveries
- January 26th – Rockford Sight & Hearing event (lunch) at the Center. Reservations are due by January 14th
- January 27th – Happy Birthday to Otto Johann
- January 29th – Happy Birthday to Carol Klokkenga
- January 30th – Happy Birthday to Kurt Vannaken

HELP GET THE WORD OUT!

Please visit our social media pages. Every “like” and visit helps us become more visible and, in turn, gets the word out about our services. You will find fun posts, videos, Tech Tuesdays, news about upcoming events, pictures and more!

Website: www.cicbvi.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/cicbvi

Did you know our website has a tab called “Resources” where you can find a list of places to go for all your specialized needs from Braille adapted cooking utensils, magnifiers, books, social welfare services and more.

LOOKING AHEAD:

We are still making progress in expanding our transportation services.

February we’re looking forward to a “Bagels and Bracelets” craft event.

Also in February we hope to have a Mobility Training session for new white cane recipients.

In March we hope to have an entry in the Peoria St. Patrick’s Day parade.



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**Free Matter for the Blind &
Visually Impaired**

Quote for the Month

“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language and next year’s words await another voice. To make an end is to make a beginning.” - T.S. Eliot