

NABA**Northeastern Association
of the Blind at Albany****B R I G H T E R H O R I Z O N S**

A publication of the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany



Dear Friends of NABA,

Our goal at NABA is to be the best full-service organization we can possibly be. Our service numbers are the strongest they have ever been. In 2019, we hit or exceeded all of our rehabilitation service goals, including the number of people served in all age categories and breadth of services offered. We found people jobs, connected them to services and helped them with their vision loss giving them hope. I am very proud of all that we achieved during 2019. We were off to a wonderful start this winter when life changed for all of us due to our current worldwide health crisis.

NABA's manufacturing facility continues to produce protective coveralls and vests for NYC Transit Authority, NYS Department of Transportation, Metro North Railroad and Long Island Railroad. NABA also supplies drug test kits and cleaning products to other government customers. We are very proud of our employees who create these essential products and for our ability to quickly pivot to also produce desperately needed face masks for direct care providers of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). We are honored to join the fight against COVID-19 by making essential products for our fellow New Yorkers.

NABA has also met the challenges imposed by mandated social distancing and continues to provide many services remotely to the blind and visually impaired of the Capital Region because vision loss hasn't stopped during this time.

The rehabilitation services staff are connecting with people differently from our preferred in-person sessions instructing in daily living skills and assistive technology via phone, email and several on-line platforms. Social workers are providing support, counseling and sharing community resources to help our participants cope with their current circumstances. Initial assessments for adults and intakes for seniors are taking place and those people who are waiting for in-person services are being contacted by instructors. NABA employment specialists continue to pursue short-term work experiences for adults and students and to work with those seeking permanent jobs to improve their readiness. They are also monitoring those who started positions recently to support them and their employers in successful placements. Instructional videos have been created for parents of children with visual impairments to foster independent living skills while families are spending more time together. And of course, our adaptive equipment store items are available for purchase while we are unable to have the store and low vision center open.

As we look forward to resuming our valued and valuable services fully, we will stay true to our mission to help people who are blind become and stay independent. We plan to remain a vital resource to our community as we have been since 1908. I want to thank all of you who support our efforts as we continue to change people's lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Burke'.

Christopher T. Burke
Executive Director/CEO

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Inserts:

Pre-Diabetes Test

**Please
switch me
to paperless
Brighter Horizons!**

By delivering our newsletter electronically, NABA can improve the experience for our readership and save significantly on print and mailing costs.

Please email Gail Hessney at ghessney@naba-vision.org, with Brighter Horizons in the subject line and your full name and mailing address in the email.



NABA's Low Vision Store Is Open

To all NABA shoppers, the Low Vision Store is open and will ship items to your doorstep! You can order items such as:

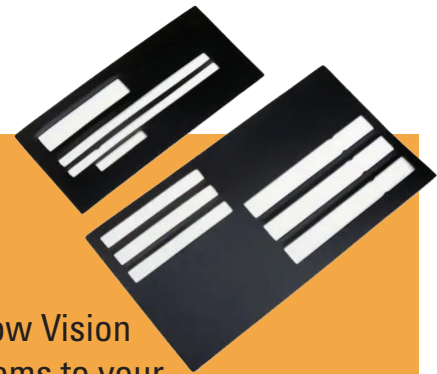
Writing Guides - Low Vision writing paper, pens, signature guide, check writing guide, large print check register

Adaptive Time devices such as Low Vision Watches and Clocks, Talking Watches and Clocks

Protective Gear- UV Protected Sunglasses

Magnifiers and Canes are also available to re-order.

And more ... For query or to place order call 518-463-1211 #237



Beating Back Boredom

A vital aspect of thriving while practicing social distancing is having leisure activities that are interactive. Adaptive games can be ordered directly from NABA or an online source such as Amazon or Maxi-Aids (at www.maxiaids.com), an online source with a line of products for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Seniors commonly request large print BINGO cards or playing cards that can be played with family at their homes, braille versions of both are available at Maxi-Aids. Large print and braille Monopoly, large print and braille Scrabble, large high contrast dice with raised dots for dice games, and any question and answer games are also available and good options for staying in together.

The Talking Book and Braille Library also makes audio books available for youth and seniors alike to borrow at no cost. Many adults have bought Kindles and download the books for their parents who then just have to tap the icon and listen. For more information, email tbbl@nysed.gov.



Staff Spotlight-Life Challenges Require New Tactics



Coping with significant vision loss is life-changing and a challenge to adapt to and understand on one's own. Our social workers are here to help you navigate this overwhelming transition.

NABA's highly trained staff will address personal coping strategies and supports throughout the community to help you adjust your lifestyle. Our social workers directly offer counseling, problem-solving skills, and social skills as they apply to vision loss. They are here to guide, educate and

assist the visually impaired with these new challenges. Examples of community services that sustain personal independence may include: transportation, clothing, housing, SNAP, applying for benefits, etc.

If you have already been approved for NABA's rehabilitation services and need to speak to one of our Social Workers, please call (518) 463-1211 to schedule an appointment.

Tips on Working From Home

The current COVID-19 situation means that many people who have never worked from home find themselves trying to navigate a new way to work. Working from home is a big transition. Technology can be a challenge as well as communication. To work from home successfully it is important to establish a routine. Have regular office hours, take breaks and schedule your time so that you have tasks to focus on.



Those that normally use assistive technology at work may face additional challenges if there is limited access to that technology while at home. If that is the case, the best solution is to communicate these changes with your supervisor and have an open conversation about tasks which may take longer or a change in work duties which may need to be temporarily shifted. If you are planning to ask to have a task delegated to someone else offer suggestions of other tasks you can take on to share the workload.

Flexibility is required of everyone in these unusual times. Communication with a supervisor about what your own situation is while working from home goes a long way towards proving your value and commitment to the company.

Finding Work In The Midst Of The Virus:

If you are out of work right now there are plenty of businesses still hiring! Essential businesses are urgently in need of employees. Grocery stores, security, the medical field, online retailers like Amazon and NYS are all urgently looking for employees. While some roles may be temporary, a good worker always has the potential to become permanent. NY Pause is a great time to browse job boards and find opportunities.



Many interview processes are being adapted for the current public health situation. Most companies are doing phone interviews and a second video interview over a platform like Zoom. Video interviews might sound intimidating but they should be treated just the same as a regular interview. Prepare as you normally would by practicing questions and dressing the part.

In addition to normal interview preparation, make sure you have a good internet connection and download any software needed well before the interview so that you aren't late while figuring out the technology piece. Eye contact is also something to consider over a video interview. A firm handshake and good eye contact go a long way in making a good first impression. Since a handshake isn't an option, practice a good introduction and get familiar with where your camera is located on the device that you will be using so that you can look directly into the camera, which is the video equivalent of good eye contact. Right now is the perfect time to press forward with your job search since those who are hiring are likely to speed up the process to fill immediate needs.

Serving Consumers Remotely During Covid-19



During this time of social isolation, NABA staff continues to serve legally blind residents of the greater Capital District using remote access. NABA, like many human service agencies, has learned to adapt to new teaching strategies by providing tele-services to their consumers. Although not as ideal as in-person contact, tele-services help NABA maintain consistent contact with consumers by assisting them with advancing their adaptive skills and connecting them to their community.

Currently, “visits” come in many forms depending on the consumer’s needs and abilities. Instruction, counseling, and tech support is provided by phone, email, text and Face-time. Our Employment Specialists continue to support those attaining or retaining jobs.

This is a particularly challenging time for seniors who are struggling even more with the increased isolation imposed by travel and social restrictions. For this reason, all instructors are checking in with friendly phone calls to ensure our consumers’ welfare and to help them access valuable resources they might need.

NABA would like to thank all of their consumers for their continued patience during this challenging time and we look forward to easier times in the months ahead.



KidSight for Riley

This is Riley and, “he is very happy with his new glasses!” writes Riley’s Mom. “Kathryn was able to use the SPOT Vision Screener to detect a problem and refer us to an Ophthalmologist who was able to provide us with a diagnosis and early treatment and correction.”

Throughout the year, Kathryn Miklowitz, LPN, visits daycares, nursery schools and Head Start programs in a 14-county area to screen over 5000 children aged 18 months to 5 years old. Lions Clubs are on hand to assist in many locations.

Young children with vision problems often do not have the language or the comparison to know they don’t see what everyone else sees. The earlier a problem can be detected and addressed, the better off the child will be physically, socially, academically and intrinsically.

“The vision screening is truly a wonderful service NABA provides, and on behalf of our students and staff I thank you,” said Susie Snyder, RN, at the Wheelerville Union Free School in Caroga Lake, NY.

Spring Surrounds Us- Resilience and Adaptive Responses to COVID

As an Intake and Referral Specialist for NABA's Adaptive Living Program (ALP), meeting the needs of our senior members since COVID-19 has presented some challenges, but none so daunting that both NABA staff and our consumers haven't been able to overcome. Although physical distancing has required us to conduct assessments over the telephone, our senior members have overwhelmingly risen to this occasion, always summoning a positive attitude and spirit of collaboration. I have been inspired, lifted, and gratified by our members' strength and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Here are some inspiring examples of how our senior members are coping:



Who likes Rhubarb and Haiku? One of our new and very creative clients does. She is writing a cookbook that pairs this deliciously tart vegetable with Haiku verse. Both share similarities: Rhubarb is sharp yet sweet; Haiku is a three-line poem that cuts to an image with intensity. We'll be keeping an eye on its publication date scheduled for this fall.

Spring is here: In the beautiful hills of Rensselaer, another new member is planning her spring gardens and ordering potting soil. She was heading out to her garden after our phone call.



Facetime and Connecting with others:

Other clients are using or learning new software to check in with family and friends. Whenever we can, we remind our clients to do something they enjoy every day. Call a friend or family member, cook or order a special meal, listen to your favorite music or show. It's important for our clients to know that this is temporary and we'll all get through this together.

Learning at Its Best! Youth and Teen Programs



Youth from eight to eighteen participated in Winter Break at NABA where recreational and rehabilitation activities teach adolescents who are blind and visually impaired to learn life skills and grow socially.



The week kicked off with students in a fourteen-county region having a blast together as they played a fun learning game with mystery kitchen utensils, made delicious mini pizzas in our teaching kitchen, created awesome clay volcanoes and skated with friends at the Bethlehem YMCA. Special thanks to the Saratoga Lions Club for lending us their skating supports!



Day two's great tactile art lesson was once again led by the wonderful Patrice Mastrianni, who has been a special guest teacher at NABA for many years. Important opportunities for socialization and building lasting friendships continued through a full agenda: a new cardio drumming routine, a social work sharing session, a 4-floor scavenger hunt around the building, volcanic eruptions (yay science!), and finally BINGO. Everyone surely slept well that night!



The Starry Night! Patrice returned for a lesson about Vincent Van Gogh that combined academics, individual tactile painted art and team work - the grand finale was one magnificent mosaic masterpiece. The value of teens being active and getting to hang out with peers like themselves cannot be understated at this developmental time of life. That they were able to do so, and learned how to make and enjoy homemade guacamole this week, is the foundation of our Youth and Teen Program.



The week was an immersion in practicing orientation and mobility techniques, gaining confidence in advocating for themselves and improving daily living skills, with a grand finale making quesadillas and playing group games. Practicing body awareness, movement and strengthening at the Albany Ninja Lab was also an excellent opportunity to show off some pretty impressive skills. A big thanks to Christian, Taylor, Jeremy and Dan at Albany Ninja Lab for their positivity and instruction. What a FANTASTIC week!



For two weeks each summer, the weeks of February and April school breaks, and for one Saturday each month, the Youth and Teen program offers a wide variety of fun activities.

We are looking forward to resuming programs in-house as soon as possible.

A Big Thank You to Key Bank



NABA's teaching kitchen and laundry room are better than ever thanks to funds from Key Bank. The teaching kitchen is not your ordinary kitchen, but one designed to incorporate accessible features to enhance lessons. Large print and braille labels have been installed on the rooms' cabinets and drawers making them more accessible to our participants. Black and white countertops offer excellent contrast for low vision participants, as do the black appliances, light colored cabinets and dark handles. There is

adjustable lighting over the two-level island created to allow young students and those unable to stand to work at an easier height.

The braille and large print labels will allow the vision rehabilitation therapists (VRTs) to teach and reinforce organizational skills as participants retrieve and replace the items needed for lessons independently. The instructors directed that uncontracted braille be used instead of the more advanced contracted braille, to ensure our youngest braille readers will be able to use them. The VRTs are orienting the students to the labels with direct lessons and exciting scavenger hunt games to find items.



The 2020 Visionary Gala was canceled due to COVID-19.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our hearts were heavy as it became necessary to cancel our Annual Gala. We look forward each year to celebrate the leadership, dedication and commitment from our community that supports NABA's mission. Please take a moment to get to know this year's recipients of our gratitude and appreciation. It is our intention to recognize their service at next year's Gala.

2020 NABA Volunteer of the Year David Hollander



David Hollander is a strong dedicated supporter of NABA. He has an affinity for NABA and a commitment to its mission. For many years, David, President of Sano Ruin Construction Services, has been a member of the NABA Golf Committee. He and his firm have sponsored NABA events throughout the years.

David personally oversaw various construction projects at NABA, the latest being the Gibney Youth Center and Teaching Kitchen. He fosters a corporate philosophy of collaboration and cultivates a client-centric approach to each project he has done for NABA. He personally strives to ensure that all of his clients receive the best building product for their project.

2020 Professional of the Year Jitka Zobal-Ratner, M.D. Children's Medical Eye Consultants, PLLC



Born in Czechoslovakia, Dr. Zobal-Ratner immigrated to the United States as a child, settling in the Capital District with her parents. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan after only 3 years of study, eager to embark on her medical studies. She returned to the Capital District to receive her Medical Degree from Albany Medical College. Her internship, residency and fellowship were also completed at Albany Medical College, with visiting fellowships in Virginia and Philadelphia. She has cared for children with all types of medical eye problems and adults with double vision for over 25 years. Amongst her

patients are premature children, who were at risk of blindness without appropriate care. For many of those years she was the sole Ophthalmologist in the Capital region caring for these fragile babies.

She has taught students at various levels. She continues to be a faculty member of Albany Medical College's Ophthalmology residency, having previously served as the Director of the Residency for 6 years. She teaches numerous other students at the college including the pediatrics and family medicine residents and medical students. She has given numerous lectures both locally and at national meetings.

She has been an active member of both the American Academy of Ophthalmology (MO) and American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS). She continues to be an examiner for the oral board examinations for the American Board of Ophthalmology.

She has authored or co-authored numerous research papers and presented at regional and national meetings. Her numerous awards include the Reinecke research award and the Sandoz teaching award while still a medical student, Chief resident for the Ophthalmology residency, and honor award for both AAPOS and AAO.

Despite these accomplishments, her main passion is to help children with poor eyesight regain vision early in life so they can achieve their full potential.

She is very impressed with the KidSight vision screening program run by NABA and aided by local Lions Clubs. She has found this to be the most accurate screening program in Upstate New York. This valuable program is able to identify eye abnormalities in very young children which could lead to lifelong vision impairment. Traditional methods of vision screening in children will miss some of the main impediments to good vision until the children are old enough to talk. This program evaluates children below two years of age. Treatment is most effective when the children are very young.

She is also a supporter of the youth and teen recreational programs. She strongly believes that socialization with peers who have a vision impairment is important in developing social milestones for these children. The programs are fun and develop senses of empowerment and volunteerism. At great financial cost, NABA transports these children from many counties to a common location.

2020 Corporate Partner of the Year Walter S. Borisenok Family Foundation

Walter Borisenok co-founded Fortitech, Inc. in 1986 and served as its CEO until the sale of the company in November 2012. At the time of its sale, Fortitech grew into a global supplier with four business units and seven manufacturing plants worldwide.



Mr. & Mrs. Borisenok

Walter Borisenok holds a B.S. in Microbiology from the SUNY at Plattsburgh. He worked in various positions in the pharmaceutical and food industries, including at Wyeth-Ayers and the German-based Milupa Corporation. Walt is currently a member of the Board of Trustees at Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and The Palace Theatre in Albany.

Since 2016, Walter and Michelle have co-owned Old Tavern Farm, a boutique thoroughbred-breeding farm. The couple meticulously restored this farm to its agrarian roots and oversee the breeding and sale of elite racing thoroughbreds.

Michelle Borisenok is a longtime entrepreneur and philanthropist. She is known throughout the Albany, New

York, Capital Region for her steadfast support of women's leadership. Michelle's latest venture, Brown Road Racing LLC, combines her love of equestrianism and passion for advocating women's leadership by bringing women and families together to learn about racing and share in the camaraderie of horse-ownership partnerships. Michelle's board membership includes: Corporate board member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties in Florida since 2016. Board member, Alzheimer and Parkinson Assn of Indian River County in Florida. Board member, Universal Preservation Hall in Saratoga Springs, and Board of Trustee and First Vice Chair of The College of Saint Rose.

They are both leaders, entrepreneurs and philanthropists, known throughout the Capital Region for their strong dedication and support of many not-for-profits. They formed The WSB Family Foundation and was granted charitable status in June, 2014. The Foundation has donated to Capital Region Sponsor a Scholarship program, Catholic Charities, Wildwood Foundation, Double H Ranch, Hudson Mohawk Humane Society, the American Red Cross, and The Community Foundation, The College of Saint Rose, Albany Girls Academy, LifePath (formerly Senior Services of Albany) and many more organizations.

This year, the Foundation and Walt and Michelle are being honored for all of their continued support and dedication to NABA. With their faithful financial contributions over the years, they've demonstrated a deep commitment to our work and mission. There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your loyalty. We at NABA are continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of donors like yourself who answer the call to give again and again.

COVID-19

Spring dates have been canceled
due to COVID 19.

Mark your calendars!



The 21st Annual Golf Tournament

Sept 14th – Wolfert's Roost Albany

This September will be like no other we have known before. We will not know how things will be until we get there. It is our hope that this September is like those anticipative Homecomings long past: getting back into a daily rhythm, seeing friends, intellect advanced, games, dances, and yes, homework.

NABA is busy preparing our 21st Annual Visionary Golf Tournament at this very moment. This year will be a blend of the familiar, enjoyable and generous, while also a time to come together safely, spaciouly and with a new outlook. May you have lots of opportunity to practice your swing, hone in your putting and reach out to friends that you wish to spend time with, face-to-face, at all 18 holes.

See you in September!

For sponsorship information and questions, please contact
Michele O'Hare at mohare@naba-vision.org, (518) 463-1211 x241, or
Gail Hessney at gnessney@naba-vision.org, (518) 463-1211 x 201.

12th Annual Low Vision Tech Fairs



October 13th – Albany

Chris Gabriels, MD, Gabriels Eye MDs of Albany presenting on Glaucoma
Adnan Mallick, MD, RelinaCare Consultants of Latham presenting on Macular Degeneration

October 14th – Saratoga

Jeffrey H. Stern, MD PhD, Capital Region Retina, PLLC of Albany and Wilton
presenting on Retina Regeneration

Christopher R. Zieker, MD, Zieker Eye of Wilton presenting on Cataracts

At both fairs: the newest low vision technologies for reading, computers and adaptive vision aids, adaptive living experts on living successfully with low vision, vision rehabilitation therapy, **and more!**



Questions!

Please contact Lisa Jordan at
ljordan@naba-vision.org or (518) 463-1211 x 225.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that NABA thanks all of our sponsors and friends for their support of the 2020 Visionary Gala. We are as appreciative of your generosity as we are saddened that it too was effected by the COVID 19 crisis.

PLATINUM



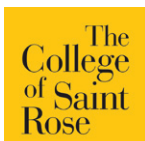
SILVER



BRONZE



COPPER



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Prediabetes Risk Test - National Diabetes Prevention Program

- _____ How old are you? (Use point value in parentheses to tally score.)
 Under 40 years (0) 40-49 years (1) 50-59 years (2) 60 years or older (3)
- _____ Are you a man or woman? Man (1) Woman (0)
- _____ Have you ever been diagnosed with gestational diabetes? Yes (1) No (0)
- _____ Do you have a parent or sibling with diabetes? Yes (1) No (0)
- _____ Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure? Yes (1) No (0)
- _____ Are you physically active? Yes (0) No (1)
- _____ What is your weight category? (See chart below)

Adapted from Bang et al., Ann Intern Med 151:775-783, 2009. Original algorithm was validated without gestational diabetes as part of the



Total Score

If you scored 5 or higher – You are at increased risk for having prediabetes and are at high risk for type 2 diabetes. However, only your doctor can tell for sure if you have type 2 diabetes or prediabetes, a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. **Talk to your doctor to see if additional testing is needed.**

Type 2 diabetes is more common in African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. Higher weight increases diabetes risk for everyone. Asian Americans are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes at lower weights (about 15 pounds lower than the weights in the 1 Point column).

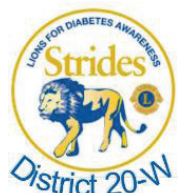
You can reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes. Find out how you can reverse prediabetes and prevent type 2 diabetes through a CDC-recognized lifestyle change program at

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program.

Height	Weight (lbs.)		
4'10"	119-142	143-190	191+
4'11"	124-147	148-197	198+
5'0"	128-152	153-203	204+
5'1"	132-157	158-210	211+
5'2"	136-163	164-217	218+
5'3"	141-168	169-224	225+
5'4"	145-173	174-231	232+
5'5"	150-179	180-239	240+
5'6"	155-185	186-246	247+
5'7"	159-190	191-254	255+
5'8"	164-196	197-261	262+
5'9"	169-202	203-269	270+
5'10"	174-208	209-277	278+
5'11"	179-214	215-285	286+
6'0"	184-220	221-293	294+
6'1"	189-226	227-301	302+
6'2"	194-232	233-310	311+
6'3"	200-239	240-318	319+
6'4"	205-245	246-327	328+
Points:	1	2	3
0 points for weight less than 1 Point			



Risk Test provided by the American Diabetes Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



NABA

**Northeastern Association
of the Blind at Albany**

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