



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,

I am very excited and honored to join this exceptional organization. NABA has an outstanding history of assisting individuals who are blind or visually impaired achieve independence and growth. Within my first couple months, it has become clear to me that the talented and dedicated board, staff, volunteers, and community partners are poised and ready for continued excellence.

While the field of blindness and visual impairment is new to me, I have always been passionate about connecting people with the tools and resources they need to thrive, and NABA has a demonstrated history of doing just that. It is in this spirit, that serving as Executive Director feels like coming home literally and figuratively (I am thrilled to be back in the Capital Region). As I am learning the ropes and connecting with sponsors, patrons, and participants; I am happy to say that the NABA extended family has been gracious, warm, welcoming, and enthusiastic.

I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know all the friends of NABA. My door is always open and I love hearing from folks who are willing to share their experiences with the organization. As the agency begins a new chapter during this unprecedented time of challenges brought on by the global pandemic, I am eager to engage with all constituents to explore avenues for innovation and collaboration. Please feel free to reach out to me directly anytime.

The services that NABA provides would not be possible without the tremendous support of our donors, corporate sponsors and volunteers. To all of you who have helped us and supported us throughout the year, thank you. If you would like to find out more about NABA's services or would like to donate your time or resources, please contact us or visit us at www.naba-vision.org.

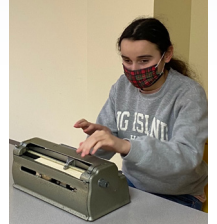
Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura".

Laura E. Zeliger
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer

In this Issue

- 2 Welcome to New Staff, the Store and Low Vision Exams
- 3 Gratitude for the Little Things that Go a Long Way
- 4 NABA Youth Wins Big
- 5 Children's Vision Screening is Back
- 6 Low Vision Tech & Wellness Fair / Visionary Golf / NABA-Vision.org Updates
- 7 The Return of Tech Help / CARS / CLYNK
- 8 Planned Giving Note / AmazonSmiles / E-news for You



Welcome to NABA!

Akbar Kermanshahi, has joined NABA as **Accounts Payable/ Staff Accountant**. The many moving parts to NABA's services, manufacturing and events welcome Akbar's seasoned expertise, analytic mind and steadfast attention to the task at hand. He is proving to be an asset to NABA, our business partners and those we serve.



Rebecca Katz, our new **Finance Manager**, is applying her strong background in Inventory Management and Accounting as well as her BS in Accounting, that she will be completing this May. Her goal is striving to always improve processes in Accounting and Manufacturing.

Tzigane Lajeunesse, LPN, has joined NABA as our new **KidSight Coordinator**. She comes to us with the experience of working in direct care with the elderly, many with low vision, and is excited to be doing preventative work with youngsters. More on the Kid-Sight program on page 5.



Kyle Frownfelter is our new **Assistive Technology Instructor**. Relocating from Michigan to join NABA, Kyle brings a wealth of firsthand knowledge of adaptive equipment, an upbeat and easygoing teaching style and a contagious enthusiasm for the possibilities that exist in the field and beyond.

Scheduling Low Vision Exams

Low vision exams are available by appointment on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the Harry M. Judge Vision Rehabilitation Center and at the Saratoga Health Center on the last Wednesday of each month. For appointments call 518-463-1211 x 218, Monday - Friday, 8AM to 4PM.



The Low Vision Store

Shopping is by appointment only and is available during regular business hours. Masks and social distancing are required.

To place an order call 518-463-1211 x 241, Monday - Friday, 8AM to 4PM.

LED Pocket Slide Magnifier:



Gratitude in Action

"We do the big things by getting the little things right for our communities." Michelle Wu

For over four years Mike Smith has known the heartfelt gratitude for the little things in life that become huge after vision loss. Daily tasks most of us take for granted accumulate into a set of challenges that would overwhelm anyone. As a retiree volunteering for the Colonie Senior Services, Mike heard a presentation about NABA's low vision services. An outgoing senior with a big heart, Mike had been losing his vision for nearly a decade and it was affecting his life in many ways: from the ability to use his phone and other electronic devices to managing important daily tasks at home.



"I just cannot praise NABA enough for how much they help people." Mike was a regular at the monthly Tech Tuesdays for a long time. "Staff would ask 'What do you want to do today?' and we would practice whatever I needed to. Even when I didn't know what I needed done, they would help figure it out and program my phone accordingly. They would always make sure I caught the bus home!" Tech Tuesdays was very popular at NABA before the shutdown and we are bringing it back this summer! More on page 7 and further details will be posted on our website at <https://naba-vision.org/assistive-technology/>.

Eleanor is a good friend that helps Mike with getting around and taking care of things at home and whose late husband also had low vision. She has given Mike his low vision flip phone where physical buttons are more navigable than a screen. Just recently, Kyle Frownfelter, NABA's Assistive Technology instructor, found a brand-new low vision flip phone with a button that lets the phone talk to the user. "We love it when Kyle comes to the house. Kyle was there to help with the flip phone so I can press the yes and no to hear options - NABA is #3 on the phone's list of numbers," Mike explained.

"Basically, I cannot give enough praise for NABA. Every time a new challenge comes up, David comes up with a solution." NABA's Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, David Goodman, made Mike's medications accessible. From setting up a system that incorporates daily fluctuations in some dosages, to distinguishing multiple prescriptions of eye drops by the feel of the caps rather than the original color coding, David has provided Mike the ability to stay safe and healthy.

"Even something as simple as the print size on a basic item can make all of the difference," for Mike. There are many products on the market today that are specifically helpful for people with low vision. NABA keeps a supply of commonly purchased items in the store at 301 Washington Avenue in Albany.



Large Print Pill Dispenser

Insurance and grants cover much of the service hours NABA provides. Our Manufacturing and Development Departments work hard to fund any gaps in coverage so no one is ever turned away because they cannot afford it. If you would like to help support NABA's ability to provide services for everyone who needs them, please utilize the enclosed envelope or the donation page on our website for your donation at <https://naba-vision.org/donations/naba-online-donations/>.

NABA Youth Wins!

CONGRATULATIONS to NABA Youth Program participant Nihanth Padmi, for winning the Lions Clubs of NYS and Bermuda MD20 Peace Essay Contest! He was celebrated at NABA this winter with a plaque and check from the Lions, and a Lions sweatshirt from his sponsoring club, the Chazy Lions. "Connecting to nature is an important thing," begins his winning essay.

Lions Clubs International created the contest to give young people who are visually impaired the opportunity to express their feelings of peace. Recognizing the value of this expression of young people, the International Essay Contest has become a Lions Clubs staple world-wide. Having won the District 20W contest (the 16 northeastern counties of New York), then MD20, there is still the chance to win a grand prize of \$5000 at International.



L-R: Laura Zeligler, NABA Executive Director; PDG John McDonald, NABA Board Member; VDG Ricky Laurin; Nihanth Padmi; Lion Priscilla Laurin; Senia Fleming, NABA Youth Program Coordinator, DG Michele O'Hare

Nihanth, 13, chiefly enjoys the outings with the NABA Youth Program. He was born legally blind as an all too common result of Albinism, a genetic condition that leads to having very light skin, hair, and eye color, and can affect the retina and the nerves behind the eyes.

Nihanth loves to write fiction. Stories where his characters are based within video game settings is his favorite structure. His parents suggested he enter the contest and by way of sudden inspiration, followed by a lot of research, the essay materialized.

His essay boldly identifies that society's creature comforts are destroying nature at a rate current activism cannot overcome alone. His practical suggestions tie global peace to individual action and immediate personal benefit. He states that, "If you connect to nature, you would be happy or maybe have the ability to get smarter, and have less stress." Most importantly he includes the instructions that are simple enough for anyone to do anywhere:

To connect to nature, you should do some meditation, slow down and be present, get into your senses, use a sit spot, watch your local animals, do yoga, learn about some plants, go wildlife tracking, take a slow wander around nature, observe nature, or learn any other animal language, or just take a plain old nature walk and at the same time observing nature.

His recommendations included observing through all of your senses and blindfolded, the birds in your yard, plants in your home and running your fingers in the soil outside, "noticing the textures and smells . . . What does it feel like to get dirty?" to reconnect to the nature that we are all a part of.

Everyone at NABA wishes Nihanth the best of luck at the next level and hopes everyone reading this takes just one suggestion to heart and gives it a try.



Children's Vision Screen is Back in Full Swing

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." - Benjamin Franklin

New beginnings happen all of the time. Last August, Tzigane began preparing for the start of the new school year as the KidSight Coordinator. Once earning her LPN after a rewarding career working in geriatrics, she chose to work with children to help prevent avoidable lifelong major challenges.



There are a number of significant eye issues that if caught and taken care of before a child is six years old, will save them a lifetime of vision loss. Digital images are taken with the SPOT Vision Screener to detect vision problems like astigmatism (an issue with focusing), farsightedness, nearsightedness, Cataracts, glaucoma or a mis-alignment of one or both eyes. In some cases, the short-term use of glasses can treat a mis-alignment of the eyes, but if severe, the child may need to undergo surgery. Children are sent home with a referral to see a doctor, or a note saying it is not necessary, the same day.



Tzigane pictured with Jennifer Pascarella, Schenectady Site Coordinator, Early Childhood Education Center

Most children do not have a vision screening before they enter first grade. The screening camera is quick, easy and painless. There are no eye drops needed for the screening, but the child does need to remain still for up to 30 seconds for the camera to get the reading. By reading the child's gaze, the camera removes whatever limitations the child's verbal and reading skill level may be. Because children with disabilities are more prone to vision problems too, removing these barriers is significant.

In the year before the shutdown NABA performed almost 6,000 KidSight screenings. Everywhere Tzigane has gone so far, they are very familiar with KidSight and always very grateful for the program and "the children are hilarious. It's lots of fun that does a lot of good." The pandemic still impacts this program a great deal. So many kids are out with covid or quarantining that doubling back to a site is the only way to reach all of the children.

NABA's KidSight Program provides free vision screen to children between the ages of 18 months and 6 years old throughout our 14-county service area.

If you would like your child's school, daycare or early childhood education program to have a screening day, please call (518) 463-1211, extension 227.

Digital images taken with the SPOT Vision Screener detect early signs of possible vision problems.



Save the Dates!

14TH ANNUAL LOW VISION TECH & WELLNESS FAIRS

9:00 AM to Noon

Free to the Public!

Keynote Speaker at 10:00AM

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 ♦ Saratoga Holiday Inn

Dr. Adia Wakil, M.D. of Bailey, Wakil & Auringer, PLLC

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 ♦ Glenville Senior Center

Dr. Glenn Thompson, M.D. of Kennedy Ophthalmology Associates

Thursday, October 13, 2022 ♦ Albany Jewish Community Center

Speaker TBA

- ♦ The latest in low vision technology equipment for reading, computers, watching television and adaptive visual aids.
- ♦ Adaptive living experts on living successfully with low vision
- ♦ Area agencies providing a wide variety of services, support and information.



www.naba-vision.org/events/

[14th Annual Low Vision Tech and Wellness Fairs](#)



23rd Annual Visionary Golf Tournament

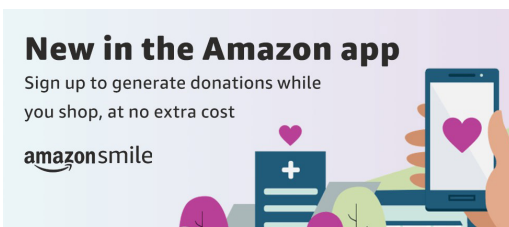


Monday, Sept 12, 2022

The event begins with registration and lunch, followed by a shotgun start, dinner and awards at the Wolferts Roost Country Club in Albany.

To sponsor this event or sign up to volunteer, please contact Gail Hessney at (518) 463-1211 x201 or ghessney@naba-vision.org.

Thank you for supporting NABA through the AmazonSmile program!



For easy access to donating to NABA while you shop Amazon:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone, select main menu
2. Tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Northeastern Association Of The Blind At Albany Inc"
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/14-1338302>

The Return of Free Monthly Technology Training!

Tuesday, May 10 & Wednesday, June 22 from 4-5:30 PM
July & August TBA at NABA, 301 Washington Ave, Albany

Tech Help, (formerly known as Tech Tuesday), is making its way back since the shutdown. One afternoon a month, staff and tech savvy volunteers will be on hand to assist people with vision impairment to access their devices such as Windows laptops, iPads and cell phones. This workshop is free of charge to the blind and visually impaired. Participants need to bring their own devices and passwords.



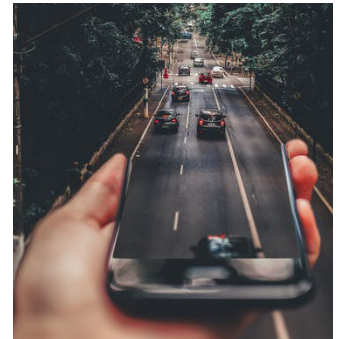
Albany Med students volunteer tech skills

You will need to sign up ahead of time with your name, phone number, type of device and your challenge. Please contact Angel Brassard (518) 463-1211 x 241 or abrassard@naba-vision.org to register for training, more information, or to become a volunteer trainer. The next dates will be available on NABA's website and as Facebook events as they are scheduled, and Angel will contact those who are already on the registration list.

Donate Your Car in One Click

Donate your car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat to NABA. CARS will arrange the free pick-up of your vehicle donation with you directly.

- pick up within 24 to 72 business hours for most vehicles,
- at no cost to you,
- you receive an initial receipt upon pick-up,
- once your vehicle is sold forms for tax purposes will be provided for a possible tax deduction.



To begin this simple process, call (866) 398-4483 or go to www.careasy.org/nonprofit/Northeastern-Association-of-the-Blind-at-Albany-Inc.



Every Little Bit Helps - CLYNK to Give!

Collect bottles daily in your home, workplace or organize a bottle drive in your community!

- ➔ CLYNK to Give provides NABA with account-specific bag tags and special CLYNK bags. Contact Gail Hessney ghessney@naba-vision.org or 518-463-1211 x 201 to get your tagged bags.
- ➔ Returning your filled bags to the bottle return kiosk at any nearby participating Hannaford provides invaluable support to NABA all year-long!



BAG IT



TAG IT



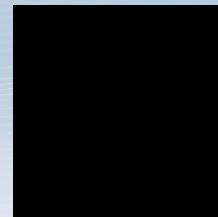
DROP IT

Since kicking off in April 2021, 7,824 containers have been turned into \$391.60 for NABA. Learn more about CLYNK or find the nearest drop off location to you at www.clynk.com.



**Northeastern Association
of the Blind at Albany**

301 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12206



The Best Time to Plan for the Future is the Present!

Enclosed you will find an envelope for your convenience to mail a check or thoughtful note to NABA. Charitable estate gifts can take many forms. This may be accomplished by a specific or residual bequest in a will. *Sample paragraph:*

I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ to the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany, Inc., 301 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12206, to be used for its general purposes or as seen fit by the board of directors (or appropriate governing body) in its discretion, deems appropriate.

Please contact your lawyer to explore the best options suitable for you and your family. If you would like more information about leaving a lasting legacy to NABA, please reach out to Laura Zeliger, Executive Director/CEO at (518) 463-1211 x213 or Gail Hessney, Senior Associate of Development at (518) 463-1211 x201, or go to our website at www.naba-vision.org/ways-to-give.

Brighter Horizons as You Want It!

Email delivery with embedded links and accessibility tools are available by emailing Gail Hessney at ghessney@naba-vision.org, with Brighter Horizons in the subject line and your full name and mailing address in the email.

For your copy in Braille, please call Kathleen Lather at (518) 463-1211 x 231.

