



VISION BEYOND THE ORDINARY

## Westmoreland County Blind Association



### Mission Statement

The mission of this corporation is to improve the quality of life of the blind and visually impaired and to assist in the prevention of blindness in Westmoreland County.

# ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL 2016-17

## *Organization in Review:*

Since 1948, the mission of the Westmoreland County Blind Association has been to improve the quality of life of the blind and visually impaired and to assist in the prevention of blindness. In order to fulfill our mission, the WCBA offers a variety of services that enhance the productivity and independence of blind and visually impaired individuals, and seeks to educate the community about eye disease & damage prevention and detection.

For many, finding meaningful employment in today's economic climate is difficult. Consider the diminished employment opportunities for those who have lost their vision.

Employment not only fulfills the need for a source of income, but also the need to be independent and productive. At WCBA, 75% of our workforce is visually impaired or multi-challenged. Employment areas include Administration and Management, Manufacturing, Embroidery, and Document Destruction.

# *Specialized Services*



The Specialized Services Department of the Westmoreland County Blind Association meets the needs of the blind and visually impaired throughout the Westmoreland and Indiana County area. The implementation of the program allows the blind to become more independent. The wide array of services offered to the blind are at no cost to the consumer.

The description of services is as follows:

## **CHORE SERVICES:**

- reading & reviewing mail
- filling out paper work & applications
- picking up groceries for the consumer
- assisting in shopping for and with the consumer

## **LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION: (Established to promote independence for the consumer through)**

- educational sessions from staff & outside resources
- demonstrating usage of visual aides & appliances
- teaching consumers how to better acquaint themselves to daily activities

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

- medical appointments
- banks
- grocery stores
- pharmacies
- agencies such as AAA, Social Security office, etc.

## **GUIDANCE & COUNSELING:**

- to provide counseling to blindness related issues
- to assist in guiding the consumer to proper outside resources

## **ADVOCACY:**

- seek resources that can benefit the consumer regarding their blindness or visual impairment
- ensure that consumer's rights are not being violated

## *Low Vision Program*



Over the past 23 years, the Westmoreland County Blind Association has been involved with Dr. Chris Cakanac in providing low vision services. The program was the first low vision clinic to be established in Westmoreland County. The number of patients seen has grown from 50 to over 200 on an annual basis.

The Westmoreland County Blind Association is responsible for providing the visual aids for the clinic. There is a wide range of visual aids available to the patients and the recommended items cannot always be satisfactory to the consumer. The problem occurs with the patient's inability to determine whether or not the visual aids can be helpful without actually using them in their daily lives. Due to these difficulties the Westmoreland County Blind Association developed a loaner program with its visual aids so that, the patients can take the items home for two weeks and make their own determination on how useful the items are. This system has been very assistive to the patient.

This program has provided options for visually impaired consumers that were not available in the past. The addition of these items as well as obtaining the newest developments in technology is crucial to the effectiveness of this program.



## *Pre-Vocational Services*



The WCBA Work Activities Center (WAC) provides therapeutic and developmental work tasks for the multi-challenged consumer while developing good working habits. WAC consumers develop general, non-job specific skills. They learn to focus on following instructions and task completion. They develop fellowships with other consumers and learn the importance of teamwork. Our consumers also learn workplace safety, punctuality, and peer interaction.

Individuals in the Work Activities Center perform jobs such as document destruction, box making, and labeling while learning to function in a true workplace atmosphere. The skills learned offer the individual a path toward independence and self-reliance through paid work. WCBA document destruction, packaging and hard drive destruction services performed by the Work Activities Center consumers are available to the public. All proceeds from these services are used to fund programs that benefit the blind, the visually impaired, and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## *Adult Training Facility*



The Westmoreland County Blind Associations Adult Training Facility (ATF) is comprised of twenty-one (21) multiple intellectually and physically challenged adults who participate in functional activities in an effort to meet personal needs and goals. In 2016, the ATF participated in a few fun and educational trips to Idlewild Park, Pittsburgh Zoo, and a nature walk at Mammoth Park to enhance their daily living skills and abilities.

On a regular basis, they participate in fundraising activities such as Bake Sales of pepperoni rolls, cookies, sweet breads and special lunches. They have also made multiple Craft items such as candles and topiaries. This Christmas, they chose to use their fundraising profits to purchase toys and gifts for needy children which were chosen and presented to Westmoreland County Children's Bureau which gained attention by our local newspaper. On Veteran's Day, this group held a "Have Dessert with a Veteran" event whereas local veterans came to join us here to enjoy dessert and a drink.

The ATF has accomplished so much this year and look forward to another year of fun and educational activities and adventures.

## *Personal Community Services*

These services allow individuals the opportunity to engage in supervised leisure and social events in the community. Individuals that have PFDS waiver funding can receive Companion and Community Habilitation Services. For those that have OBRA and COMCARE funding, Personal Assistance Services are available.

## *Embroidery*



The Westmoreland County Blind Association offers custom-embroidered apparel and accessories. All items are done on the premises to offer brand exposure for your company/organization's name and logo at a very reasonable cost. Individuals are welcome to shop for something unique to honor a special occasion or event. At Embroidery by WCBA, our emphasis is on quality and service.

## *Volunteers*

The Westmoreland County Blind Association would like to thank its valued volunteers for donating their time to help the Association.

- help with tax preparation for our employees
- answering telephone calls and greeting customers in front lobby
- Prevention of Blindness screenings



# *Textiles Manufacturing Department*



Fiscal Year 2016/2017 presented WCBA's manufacturing department with operational challenges in their efforts to fulfill desired employment target levels and produce contracted product quantities while continuing to sustain our long standing recognized level of quality that meets or exceeds military specifications as set forth by the U. S. Department of Defense.

Responding to the Department of Defense (DOD's) cutback in military supplies procurement due to the reduction in both size of the Armed Forces and overall budgetary allocation(s), WCBA restructured operations to stress a much leaner and highly adaptive workforce which allows us the ability to integrate personnel across all production line operations, as needed, to accommodate the volatility of our market end-user.

Through our continued focus in investment of employee cross training, manufacturing has achieved the flexibility to utilize our workforce in a highly efficient and value added manner. In a parallel effort, we continued to act proactively with the continuation of our goal to replace older floor equipment by purchasing the latest in technological based equipment, specifically modified with 'Assistive Technology' features that aid our blind/sight-impaired employees in expanding their available job opportunities. In doing so, we fostered personal growth and achievement of each of the individual's skill set and level of accomplishment.

The department's portfolio continued to find support with our participation in the production of the following government contracts that includes:

- U.S. Army Generation III (ECWCS) Extreme Cold Weather Clothing System, Layer #2 for use in operations conducted in extreme cold weather conditions.
- Joint Services Light Integrated Suit Technology (JS List Bag) carry bag for chemical, biological and nuclear safety clothing on the battlefield.
- Flyer's Kit Bag (FKB) used by Armed Forces aviators to carry maps, charts, helmet and other mission critical gear onto their aircraft.
- U.S. Navy Neckerchief, part of the enlisted man's dress uniform.

Department of Defense contract awards are through our association with the National Industries of the Blind (NIB), and are subject to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD) of 1971, a federal law that mandates a compliance ratio requirement of one sighted to every three blind/sight-impaired employees. Our work force consists of 37 employees, of which 21 were blind/sight-impaired equipment operators and technicians with an additional seven sighted. The remaining nine are dedicated to supervisory, quality assurance and maintenance positions.

In addition to our Department of Defense work, WCBA's commercial product offerings included Smithcot® portable stretchers and grave marker flags.



## *Prevention Of Blindness Services*



A. To provide vision screenings to children and adults designed to detect potential vision issues and to help them obtain care subsequent to the screening.

B. To provide educational programs which stress the need for early detection, eye safety, and information about specific eye disease and disorders.

The Specialized Services and Prevention of Blindness Programs at the Westmoreland County Blind Association provided more than 2,600 hours of service to approximately 2,800 unduplicated consumers of Westmoreland and Indiana County. These hours of service included over 2,700 vision screenings and 150 educational sessions.

## *Employee Recognition*



Michael Kissell of Greensburg, Pennsylvania was one of the individuals honored with a UniqueSource Achievement Award.

June 19, 2017 was an evening “Embrace the Abilities” of Pennsylvanians by showcasing skills and talents that individuals with disabilities bring to the workplace each and every day. Twenty-six individuals were

recognized with UniqueSource Achievement Awards in front of family, friends, co-workers and legislators for the contributions they make in jobs that they choose to have.

“Everyone has their own life story to tell and tonight, we honor each UniqueSource Achievement Award winner for their story,” said Vince Loose, president and CEO of UniqueSource Products & Services. UniqueSource is a 501c(3) nonprofit supplier of products and services dedicated to creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. “Not because their story is about their disability, but rather because of their personal mission, commitment and professionalism to not allow their disability to be their story.”

For the last 15 years, Mike has been employed by Westmoreland County Blind Association and works as a Shredding Laborer. His responsibilities include sorting papers and preparing them for the shredder, shredding documents, sorting x-rays and placing labels on boxes. WCBA has provided him with a job where he can work with friends and a staff that treats him with respect. Mike says that he enjoys working with his friends and earning his own paycheck. He believes his job has made him more responsible and helped give him the confidence to talk with people in his community.



# *Employee Activities*





## *Fundraising*



- On February 24, 2017, WCBA hosted our 3rd Annual “Visions of Springtime” event with Light Dinner and Dancing at Greensburg Country Club in Jeannette, PA.
- The 15th Annual WCBA Golf Classic took place on June 9, 2017 at Greensburg Country Club in Jeannette, PA.

**\*\*\*Upcoming events include our “Visions of Springtime” event on March 2, 2018 at the Greensburg Country Club, Jeannette, PA. Also, our 16th annual Golf Outing will be held on June 8, 2018 at the Greensburg Country Club.**



# WCBA

## *A Year In Review 2016-2017*

*Take a look at what transpired at the Westmoreland County Blind Association (WCBA) in 2016-2017.  
We put together a review of each department  
and what was accomplished.*

### **Specialized Services, Prevention of Blindness (P.O.B.) &**

**Low Vision Services** (these services are provided in Westmoreland and Indiana Counties)

Item	Indiana	Westmld
Number of s SS consumers served	37	45
Number of Transportation Units Provided	199.5	590
Number of Life Skills Units Provided	6	40.25
Number of Support Service Units Provided	519.75	562.25
Other SS Units Provided ( ancillary)	60	245.5
Number of P.O.B. locations attended	38	24
Number of P.O.B. vision screenings completed	961	563
Number of P.O.B. Educational units provided	73	77
Number of Low Vision Evaluations provided	0	128
Number of Low Vision devices dispensed	0	147

## **Textile Manufacturing Department**

Item	Total
Extreme Cold Weather Shirts	36,238
Joint Service List Bag (JSList Bag)	22,566
Flyer's Kit Bag	4,703
Navy Neckerchief	18,220
Sight Impaired Employees	23
Sight Impaired Hours Worked	29,506.75

**Pre-vocational** (consists of consumers that attend our Work Activity Center)

**Adult Training Facility** (consumers that participate in our ATF)

**Companion/Personal Assistance Services (PAS) & Community**

**Habilitation** (consists of consumers that are taken out in the community with a WCBA staff member)

**Transportation Services** (transportation for consumers to and from programs)

Item	Total
Number of Pre-Vocational units provided	277,564
Number of ATF units provided	44,337
Number of Companion units provided	11,236
Number of PAS units provided	1,158
Number of Community Hab. units provided	10,693
Number of Transportation trips provided	9,984

\*Units are equal to 15 minutes increments.

## **Document Destruction, Record Management & Embroidery**

Shredding weight	1,887,024
Recycling weight	1,709,897
Number of monthly customers	265
Number of walk-in customers	1,275
Number of purge customers	266
Number of 64 gallon containers	448
Number of 96 gallon containers	256

Number of executive consoles	233
Walk-in Weight	120,577
Amount of donations from walk-in customers	\$2,714.21
Number of Record Management boxes stored	7,066
Hard Drives Destroyed	550
Number of Embroidery Items Sold	12,021

## **Fundraising**

Item	Total
Mail Solicitation contributions	\$24,220
Funds raised through Events	\$20,371
Number of contributors through mail solicitation	407
Lions Club contributions	\$13,675

## **Financial (Sales & Funding)**

Item	Total
Grants Received	\$198,782
PAB Revenues	\$61,296
Photo ID Revenues	\$104,498
ODP (Pre-Vocational, ATF, Companion & Community Hab.) Funding	\$1,072,443
OLTL (PAS & Pre-Vocational) Funding	\$375,156
Transportation Revenues	\$134,708
Misc. Funding	\$245,359
Manufacturing Sales	\$2,234,465
Embroidery Sales	\$72,184
Low Vision Sales	\$22,263
Misc. Sales	\$6,052
Shredding Revenues	\$247,751
Document Storage	\$18,903
Recycling Revenues	\$138,837
TOTAL	\$4,932,697.00



**VISION BEYOND THE ORDINARY**

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Blind Association**

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