



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 2021-22

## *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.

# *Training and Support Services (TSS)*



The Training and Support 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. All safety protocols surrounding COVID 19 are in place. The wide array of services offered to the blind are at no cost to the consumer. The description of services is as follows:

## **SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE HOME:**

- 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.
- peer support
- emergency first aid

## **ADVOCACY:**

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

## *Low Vision Program*



Over the past 26 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 100 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 one week 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.

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## *Pre-Vocational Services*



The WCBA Pre-Vocational Work Activities Center (WAC) provides therapeutic and developmental work tasks for the multi-challenged consumer while developing good working habits. WAC consumers develop general, nonjob 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, foam separation as well as cardboard inserts for two local companies, 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**



Our Adult Training Facility (ATF) continues to grow and now has 34 consumers. Over the summer, the ATF enjoys many fun activities, including visits to our local parks, where we go on walks and have picnic lunches. Our ATF also assists in the shopping trips needed for our events/parties.

Members of the ATF also participate in fundraising activities such as bake sales of chocolate covered pretzels and spaghetti lunches. Fundraising also enables the ATF to go on trips and participate in activities in the community.

Some of the activities that we offer in the ATF are exercise and music therapy, daily life skills, science experiments, literacy and math activities, and arts and crafts.

This year, our ATF participated in "Adopt a Planter Program" offered by the Greensburg Community Development Corporation. This program allowed our consumers the opportunity to water hanging flower baskets along S. Pennsylvania Avenue in Downtown Greensburg.

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## **Preschool Vision Screening and Eye Safety Education (PSE)**

This wonderful service is designed to offer two very important services:

- A. To provide vision screenings to children 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 Training and Supportive Services and Preschool Vision Screenings and Eye Safety Education at the Westmoreland County Blind Association provided more than 1,784 hours of service to consumers of Westmoreland and Indiana County. These hours of service included over 2,347 vision screenings and 2,430 children attending educational sessions.

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## **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 In-Home Community Habilitation Services. For those that have OBRA funding, Personal Assistance Services are available.

# *Textiles Manufacturing Department*

The department's portfolio for 2022 continues to find support with our participation in the Ability One Program with the following government contracts that include:

- U.S. Army Generation III (ECWCS) Extreme Cold Weather Clothing System, Layer #2 for use in operations conducted in extreme cold weather conditions.
- Flyer's Kit Bag (FKB) used by Armed Forces aviators to carry maps, charts, helmet or other mission critical gear onto the aircraft.
- U.S. navy Neckerchiefs, part of the enlisted dress uniform.

The Department of Defense contract awards are through our association with the National Industries of the Blind and are subject to the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD) of 1970, a federal law that mandates a compliance ratio requirement of one sighted to every three blind/sight-impaired employees.

WCBA in collaboration with NIB dedicates several days per month for training individuals on various job duties that enhances both our efficiency and productivity. Our latest in "Assistive Technology" based sewing equipment that has been specially modified with features that aid the blind/sight-impaired; we project a future workforce that possesses the necessary tools and expertise that broadens our ability for accepting a more diverse array of projects. WCBA continues actively seeking additional textile cutting/sewing opportunities to grow and strengthen our operations.



Our Eastman Raptor computerized textile-cutting machine is an essential part of WCBA daily operations. The Eastman Raptor eliminates the need for an intermediary. All projects can be completed from start to finish at our facility from the rolled material to the end product.

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## *Volunteers*

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

- Answering telephone calls and greeting customers in front lobby
- Prevention of Blindness screenings

# *Employee Recognition*

Ann Butina of Pleasant Unity, Pennsylvania received the UniqueSource Achievement Award in May 2022. This was part of their statewide recognition of individuals with disabilities who “demonstrate exceptional character,” especially in the workplace. The following questions were from Ann’s entry.

**1. What do you value most about your job?**

*“I like to receive a paycheck which allows me to do what I want to do”.*

**2. What do you like most about working for your organization?**

*“I like being with my friends and meeting a lot of new people”.*

**3. What is an interesting fact about you that you would like to share?**

*“I go to the gym every week with my Mom”.*

**4. Since working for your agency, what new skills or abilities have you acquired?**

*“I have learned how to use a paper shredder. I have also learned how to use public transportation by myself”.*

**5. Do you have future employment goals that will be made possible by the skills you have learned or the assistive technology you use on your current job?**

*“I am very happy with my job and hope to work here for a long time”.*



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UniqueSource is a 501c (3) nonprofit that supplies products and services with a mission to “create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.” UniqueSource collaborates with Pennsylvania nonprofits that employ individuals with disabilities to “market and deliver their products and services to customers in both sectors.”

## *Fundraising*

- The 20th Annual WCBA Golf Classic took place on June 3, 2022 at The Madison Club located in Madison, PA. We had over 85 golfers attend this year's event!



WCBA hosted our 1st Annual BINGO Bash on October 15, 2022 at the West Point Fire Hall in Greensburg, PA. We sold 300 tickets for this event!



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**\*\*\*Upcoming events include:**

- **Our 21st Annual Golf Outing will be scheduled on June 23, 2023 at The Madison Club in Madison, PA.**
- **Our 2nd Annual BINGO Bash will be scheduled in October 2023 at the West Point Fire Hall in Greensburg, PA.**



# WCBA

## *A Year In Review*

### *2021-2022*

*Take a look at what transpired at the Westmoreland County Blind Association (WCBA) in 2021-2022. We put together a review of each department and what was accomplished.*

#### **Training and Support Services, Preschool Vision Screenings,** **&** **Low Vision Services**

(These services are provided in Westmoreland and Indiana Counties)

Item	Indiana	Westmoreland
Number of TSS consumers served	32	44
Number of Transportation Units Provided	299.50	509.75
Number of Life Skills Units Provided	47	349
Number of Support Service Units Provided	395.50	579.50
Other TSS Units Provided ( ancillary)	0	0
Number of Preschool locations attended	5	11
Number of vision screenings completed	687	1660
Number of Preschool Educational units provided	11	9
Number of Low Vision Evaluations provided	0	93
Number of Low Vision devices dispensed	0	134

## **Textile Manufacturing Department**

Item	Total
Extreme Cold Weather Shirts	36,644
Joint Service List Bag (JSList Bag)	0
Flyer's Kit Bag	0
Navy Neckerchief	4,664
Sight Impaired Employees	10
Sight Impaired Hours Worked	9,522

**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	313,040
Number of ATF units provided	77,871
Number of Companion units provided	11,901
Number of PAS units provided	1,406
Number of Community Hab. units provided	2,429
Number of Transportation trips provided	13,747
Number of unduplicated Consumers Pre-Voc	78
Number of unduplicated Consumers ATF	17

\*Units are equal to 15 minutes increments.

## **Fund Raising**

Item	Total
Mail Solicitation contributions	22,891
Funds raised through Events	21,710
Number of contributors through mail solicitation	340
Lions Club contributions	15,500
Misc Other Contributions (Memorials & Misc Community Support	99,388

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

Shredding weight	1,650,936
Recycling weight	1,511,228
Number of monthly customers	432
Number of walk-in customers	1,470
Number of purge customers	389
Number of 64 gallon containers	469
Number of 96 gallon containers	430
Number of executive consoles	338
Walk-in Weight	141,885
Amount of donations from walk-in customers	\$4,895.61
Number of Record Management boxes stored	7,334
Hard Drives Destroyed	1,279

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

Item	Total
Grants Received	\$250,153
PAB Revenues	\$70,898
Photo ID Revenues	\$165,963
ODP Funding – Pre-Vocational	\$2,541,446
OLTL) Funding – Pre-Vocational	\$205,962
Transportation Revenues	\$532,485
Misc. Funding	\$6,578
Manufacturing Sales	\$1,407,598
Low Vision Sales	\$15,076
Misc. Sales	\$5,791
Shredding Revenues	\$328,883
Document Storage	\$24,183
Recycling Revenues	\$152,694
TOTAL	\$5,707,710



**VISION BEYOND THE ORDINARY**

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Blind Association**

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